THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

JUNE 1967

Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN — 1917: THE OVERTHROW OF TSARDOM PART I

F. C. BALL — MORE LIGHT ON TRESSELL

DISCUSSION:

RON BELLAMY — FINANCE CAPITAL

JOHN HANNA — ART, SCIENCE AND ARCHITECTURE

ROBIN JARDINE — MARXISM AND CRITICISM

Monthly 2/-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism Today

Vol. 11 No. 6

CONTENTS

		page
	Editorial Comments	161
Andrew ROTHSTEIN	1917: The Overthrow of Tsardom. Part I. The Gathering of the Storm	168
F. C. BALL	More Light on Tressell: The Story of a Search	177
DISCUSSION:		
Ron BELLAMY	Finance Capital: an Interim Reply	183
John HANNA	Art, Science and Architecture	188
Robin JARDINE	Marxism and Criticism... ...	191

AMONG ARTICLES IN JULY AND FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Andrew ROTHSTEIN	1917: the Overthrow of Capitalism. Part II. The March Revolution
Pat SLOAN	Russia Yesterday and Today
Maurice DOBB	The Centenary of "Capital"
Alan BOLD	The Diffidence that Faltered
Mike COOLEY	Trade Unionism Today
Phil LEESON	The Economics of Growth
Colin YARDLEY	Radicalism, Liberalism and Marxism
Gordon MCLENNAN	Role of the Communist Party
Kay BEAUCHAMP	Racialism in Britain Today
John LEWIS	Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism—a Reply
W. MCCALLUM	Nature of the State

Editor James Klugmann

Editorial Board

Professor J. D. Bernal
Emile Burns
Gabriel Carritt
Maurice Cornforth
Maurice Dobb
John Gollan
Jack Hendy
Arnold Kettle
John Lewis
Frank McKenna
John Mahon
Alan Morton

Editorial Correspondence
James Klugmann
16 King Street, W.C.2

Advertisements
Doris Allison,
above address

Orders and Subscriptions
usual agents or
Central Books Ltd.,
37 Gray's Inn Road,
London, W.C.1

Subscription rates
Six issues 14s. 6d.
Twelve issues 29s.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editorial Comments

A CONFERENCE of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe, east and west, was held at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, on April 24th-26th. Delegates from twenty-four parties took part, and, in addition, a representative of the Swedish Communist Party was present throughout the proceedings and addressed the conference on the final day.

Those not present were the parties of Rumania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Holland, Norway and Iceland.

On the opening day the conference adopted statements on Vietnam and on the coup in Greece; but the main item on the agenda was the question of European security. Three main aspects of this problem emerged in the course of the discussions. First, the dangers arising from West Germany. Secondly, the growing feeling in many circles that it was high time the divisions in Europe were ended and replaced by a comprehensive system of collective security covering all European states, and based on the principle that all state differences should be settled by peaceful means only. Thirdly, that there was now sufficient common ground between all sections, organisations and political parties in Europe on the question of European security, to work out a series of policy proposals which could be accepted as a basis for a European security system.

The policy proposals put forward covered such questions as the dissolution of the military organisations of both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation; the recognition of the German Democratic Republic; the acceptance of the post-1945 European frontiers, including the Oder-Neisse line; the acceptance that the 1938 Munich agreement was invalid from the moment of its signing; the signing of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and the denial of nuclear weapons to West Germany; the ending of foreign bases and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

The Conference also drew attention to other aspects of a policy for peace in Europe, such as the role of the neutral countries, the possibility of establishing nuclear free zones, partial disarmament, and the dangers stemming from the fascist states of Spain, Portugal and Greece.

All these proposals have also been put forward by other parties and political trends in Europe.

West Germany

At the centre of the preoccupation of delegates was the question of West Germany. Since the formation last year of the new coalition government, headed by the ex-Nazi Kiesinger, flanked by the reactionary Christian Democrat leader, Franz Josef Strauss, and by the Social-Democratic Party, there has been considerable discussion in political circles as to the aims and activities of this government. While noting Kiesinger's verbal "peace" overtures, delegates emphasised that it was deeds, not words, that counted. The particular deeds that they were most concerned with were the claims of the Bonn Government to represent all Germany; its refusal to accept the post-1945 frontiers; its refusal to recognise the German Democratic Republic; its toleration of the neo-Nazi NDP, while refusing to lift the ban on the Communist Party, and continuing to persecute other democratic and peace organisations; its opposition to a non-proliferation treaty, and its clamour for access to nuclear weapons. All this adds up to a pretty clear indication of expansionist and revanchist aims; and when one takes into account that the Bonn government has the enthusiastic backing of the United States, which has assigned it the role of its main military and economic base in Western Europe, it is understandable that the Karlovy Conference should characterise the policy of the West German Government as the major threat to peace in Europe at the present time.

Proposals for Action

The conference supported three proposals for action which have already been suggested and which could help to bring nearer the establishment of a collective security system in Europe. One, that a conference of European governments be held. Two, that a gathering of European Parliamentarians be convened. Third, that a congress or assembly of the European peoples be organised. All these three efforts, at different levels, could discuss ways and means of ending the divisions in Europe and making possible the achievement of a system to safeguard peace and security.

The conference of European Communist and Workers' parties, in its final Statement, and in the closing speech of the last session's Chairman,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Luigi Longo (general secretary of the Communist Party of Italy), made it clear that its proposals are in no sense a last word. The delegates did not regard themselves as having a monopoly as far as proposals for achieving security in Europe is concerned. On the contrary, they offer these as a suitable basis for discussion with all people, parties, organisations and governments concerned to act for peace. And in elaborating such a series of proposals, the conference has made a valuable contribution to the struggle for peace and security in Europe.

Political Juggling

The Government's decision to join the Common Market was never in any doubt. Wilson would never have started his so-called explorations had he not firmly decided to join. Not being able to propose any worth-while social legislation during the next year or so of deflation, negotiation for entry into the Common Market is the only thing the Prime Minister knows for the creation of the general impression that the Government is not just sitting there but doing something.

Why is the Government proposing to seek entry? It has no doubt had a good look at the economics of the situation and, if it has found hope or inspiration there, it is making a truly desperate effort to conceal it. So the argument is produced that the real gains of entering the Market are political. There is Mr. Douglas Houghton, Chairman of the Liaison Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party, pontificating in *The Times*:

> "The political case for joining Europe has taken on a new dimension. Some of my friends now see a vision that never came to Gaitskell. Europe, we discover, embraces Russia and Eastern Germany. May not the grand design include a European settlement as well as a Common Market? Could General de Gaulle say 'Non' to Kosygin?" (*The Times*, April 26th.)

Really the political jugglers are going to the limit when they equate the Common Market of six West European States with all Europe. Of course, the Soviet Union and Eastern Germany are a part of Europe. So for that matter is Britain, but the Common Market is an organisation *dividing* Europe, not *uniting* it. "Europe" in the narrow sense of the six Market countries does not embrace Russia and East Germany. The idea that the Market is even contemplating opening its doors until it embraces all the States of Europe is sheer fantasy. The aim is still a West European grouping fighting for special privileges for its member States.

In the Long Run—Perhaps

The strongest State in the Market, the Federal Republic of Western Germany is currently (1) refusing to recognise the frontiers of Europe as they emerged from the Second World War and (2) refusing to sign the treaty which prevents the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Why, in face of these facts, pretend that it would be helpful in promoting a "European settlement"? It looks as if such economic investigations as the Government statisticians have compiled are not decisive in indicating that Britain ought to enter the Market. Of course, as Harold Wilson remarked, statistics are difficult to "qualify". This may be only another way of saying that the Government has looked at the relevant statistics and, having found that they do not tell in favour of Britain joining the Market, is assiduously seeking to discover other reasons. Other Marketeers are admitting the difficulties. Here is the muted clarion call of the *Economist*:

> "It is a good sign that in 1967 fewer people believe that joining Europe (note the old deceptive formula) is an easy, automatic way to grow than believed it in 1963. *It is going to be just as painful, perhaps even more painful, than stagnating alone for many industries, firms and families.* The difference is that *when* real expansion is possible in other industries and in other firms, there is a legitimate expectation that structural change can be pressed forward, that men can be retrained for better jobs than they had, not simply going back to the mines and on to the buses, that capital investment gets its return, that managerial initiative can build upon success and not the mere avoidance of failure."

Really the Market trumpet is making a very uncertain sound.

Labour Party militants should be clear as to what they are being asked to endure. After soldiering on through an unpopular wage freeze and credit squeeze, they are being asked to endure, if Britain enters the Market, an additional painful period, adversely affecting many industries, firms and families. For what? For some hunch that things will be much better in *the long run.*

With the recent council results in mind Labour workers must be asking what if the electorate will not stand for this. They may think that they are being led, not only into the Market, but into an electoral débâcle on the scale of 1931 when Labour representation in Parliament was reduced from 288 seats to 52.

France and the Market

The last of the internal tariffs which still separate Common Market states is disappearing in 1968 and complete free trade will operate within the Market. The French Government is not exactly throwing its hat in the air at the prospect. Indeed the General has called for plenary powers till October 31st in order to tackle the emerging prob-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lems. Coal prices and fares are to be increased, there is to be a rationalisation drive which will increase unemployment, specially acute problems in coal, steel, textiles and shipbuilding will have to be faced; the deficit in the social security system has to be eliminated by higher contributions from both employers and workers.

France has been in the Market for eleven years and yet is facing exactly the same problems as Britain is doing outside the Market. No wonder the more far-seeing Marketeers in Britain are moderating their claims about what entry into the Market would produce. But then why persist in going in at all?

Essential Report

Every trade unionist should read the detailed report of the Conference of Executives which met on March 2nd this year to discuss its attitude on incomes policy (*Trades Union Congress*, price 1s. 6d.). It is interesting to note some of the things which Mr. George Woodcock was saying about the situation inside the unions:

> "What have we seen in these last six months? We have seen great resentment building up, a waning of that loyalty to the Labour Government, arising from the way that particular claims have to be dealt with under the rigid limitations of the freeze and the period of severe restraint. *There are many unions represented in this hall who can tell you better than I can of what they consider—and I believe rightly so—to be the unjust way in which their claim has been treated, where merit has been pushed to one side, and the decision as to whether the claim was tenable or not has had to be made in the light of some words in the White Paper—if you were before a certain date you were okay, if you were after a certain date you were all wrong*" (Italics ours).

As far back as March 2nd it was recognised that there was amongst the trade union cadres "a waning of that loyalty to the Labour Government". Yet no one seemed to ask what was happening to the loyalty of the ordinary worker and his wife. It seemed that many people were still under the illusion that no matter how badly the Labour voters were treated by the Government they would turn out to vote "at the end of the day". That was the illusion that the County Council results should have dispelled.

TUC Incomes Policy

However Mr. Woodcock's description of how under the Government incomes policy disputes were never treated on their merits, applies to all incomes policies—the TUC's policy no less than the Government's. To treat a case according to its merits is only possible if wage awards are made in relation to the situation of a given factory or given industry. At that level demands can be examined on their merits.

But incomes policy consists in relating wage and salary increases to the situation of the economy as a whole. If the state of the economy is held to justify a norm of only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, well that's it. No matter how well an industry is doing, it must conform to what the economy as a whole is doing and not to what a particular group of workers, a particular factory is doing. That is why "merit" is not particularly provided for in Government policy or in any policy which is based on an analysis of the economy as a whole.

Incomes policy really consists of fitting any negotiations into a preconceived framework, irrespective of the merits of the case. All Mr. Woodcock's indignation of what happens under a Government incomes policy is wasted. Exactly the same is bound to happen under any incomes policy.

Congress or Conference?

An amusing part of Mr. Woodcock's speech is devoted to the alleged superiority of a conference of trade union executives over the annual Trades Union Congress:

> "Congress inevitably deals with general matters; and the delegates are not necessarily people in executive positions, though many of them are. Congress tends to be somewhat diffuse and general. What we are talking about is a conference devoted entirely to these matters—economic and industrial matters. It will be a conference of executives, people who do the work day to day, talking about their day to day problems."

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. In the last four years or more, the Trades Union Congress has had lively and interesting debates on incomes policy. It has never had anything so utterly inept as the travesty of a debate which disgraced the Conference of Executives on March 2nd. The supporters of the General Council document never deigned to explain exactly how it was going to work, or how the new organisation—with the Conference of Executives at its centre—could operate an incomes policy that was likely to differ in its effects, from that of the Government.

There were a few ragged defences of Government policy that were not very relevant to the General Council's policy that was the theme of the Conference. No General Council member, except Frank Cousins, added an iota to the speech of Mr. Woodcock as to what the allegedly new policy was about. The outcome—some very considerable changes in trade union policy, some vast additions of the powers of the General Council were agreed on without critical analysis. Indeed what most delegates thought they were doing was simply to oppose the Government's intention to retain legislation of wages and prices.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

US Over India

During March many political assessments were made of the results of the Indian elections. However they may have varied in detail, it was clearly evident that the National Congress had suffered a severe setback. The biggest Communist advance made was in Kerala and other parts of the South, but its full political impact on the situation in India was seriously weakened because of the division of the Communist movement into two separate Parties.

Far more serious was the advance of the two main pillars of reaction: the big business Party Swatantra, which emerged second for the Central Parliament (Lok Sabha), and the Jansangh, the reactionary party of Hindu communalism. These parties gained most from the disastrous results of the right-wing Congress policy. This growth of reaction would not have been possible without the impact of US imperialist strategy, and its so-called "economic aid" schemes in India.

The effects of US imperialist strategy of the past two decades is described in graphic terms in a pre-election book by Ajit Roy, entitled *Economics and Politics of US Foreign Aid* (National Publishers, Calcutta, December 1966). The author is well-known as a writer on Indian economic problems, and his earlier works have included a book on Monopoly Capital, one on Economic Development and another on Planning in India. All these books underline the close relation between foreign investment and India's serious economic situation, and the pressure it exercises in expanding the private sector of production at the expense of the public sector.

As well as giving a detailed account of US foreign investments and the huge profits which result, this book deals mainly with the scope and character of US "foreign aid" schemes as a whole, as well as their economic and political impact on the situation in India.

"Aid" For What?

For the 18 years from 1945-1963, the US proudly boasts that its total "foreign aid" programmes amounted to $104,000 million for 97 countries. The official breakdown admits that over a third of this amount was for military aid, nearly a third was in the form of loans at varying rates of interest, and just over a third was in the form of foreign grants.

In recent years the proportion of loans has increased while the proportion of direct grants has declined. In a report to the US Senate, the Administrator of Foreign Aid declared: "Today American aid to Afro-Asian and Latin American countries is overwhelmingly in the form of dollar repayable loans" (*Financial Express*, March 11th, 1965).

Even this form of so-called aid has been cut over and over again, and its distribution depends mainly on political factors. This was made clear by J. P. Lewis, the US "aid" administrator in India who wrote in 1964:

> ". . . India's non-aligned foreign policy and her particularly voluble advocacy of public enterprise both conflicted fundamentally with the American aid posture, which was based primarily on the need to reinforce positions of allied military strength around the periphery of the Communist world and was morally committed to the promotion of private enterprise overseas."

This aim was underlined by Dean Rusk in April 1966, when he emphasised that "we are increasing our efforts to stimulate the private sector in the developing countries and increase the role of US private enterprise in our assistance programme."

Earlier (March 1966) he made clear that the purpose of foreign "aid" was *not* to assist the developing countries but to assist the United States. Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 17th, 1966, he said:

> "With relatively small and necessary exceptions, all the funds now being appropriated for *aid* programmes will be spent in the United States. As you know, *aid* is in the business of exporting US goods and services, not US dollars."

Even the surplus farm products imported under the US Public Law 480, described as "a valuable instrument of foreign policy" is really for the benefit of the United States. This was made clear by President Johnson himself in his report to Congress in May 1965 when he boasted that "American business and industry produces 87 per cent of all goods provided under these programmes and about 80 per cent of the related cargo was carried by US flag vessels".

This book is extremely useful to the progressive movement in the developing countries where Governments tend to look for foreign investment and aid rather than to follow the Tanzanian model which relies mainly on its own resources to transform its economy.

Not Yet Equal Pay

At the end of April a report appeared in *The Times* announcing that the Tripartite Working Party on Equal Pay for Women, set up by the Ministry of Labour, would have a final meeting the following week.

The timing was unfortunate (or convenient?). For on April 28th-29th, and therefore without the Working Party's Report, the Conference was held of Representatives of Unions catering for Women Workers, and organised by the TUC Women's Advisory Committee.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the Conference it was reported that out of 8¾ million women at work some two million were organised in trade unions.

The Conference could announce no advance whatever on the issue of equal pay since the previous Conference. On the contrary, the Government's incomes policy seems to have affected women even more adversely than men.

Marie Patterson, Chief Women Officer of the T & GWU, declared:

> "It is a national disgrace that workers in this country can be classified as skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled and women. . . . We cannot put our faith in Governments and legislation".

Equal pay, she added:

> "will not be won in the Conference chamber but on the factory floor . . . women must now press for claims abolishing the differential".

It is true that it is important to increase the number of women organised in the Unions, and equally true that women must strengthen their fight on equal pay.

But as the Conference correctly stressed, this is not a fight for women only, and the responsibility for it rests with the trade union and Labour movement *as a whole*.

The Young Marx

May we recommend to our readers a study of the young Marx by Bernard Delfgaauw, published by Sheed and Ward in the same series of Paperbacks that gave us the *Slant Manifesto* and Terence Eagleton's *The New Left Church*.[1]

Bernard Delfgaauw is a Dutch Professor of Philosophy, and the book arose as a series of articles in a Dutch weekly, which formed then the basis for a course of lectures in the Wageningen Agricultural College, given at the invitation of the College's Catholic Student Society.

Of course there are points and approaches that one could criticise and would like to discuss with the Professor. He treats science and technique, for instance, as if for Marx they were uniquely part of the superstructure. Whilst he explains Marx's view of how the basis determines the superstructure, he greatly underestimates Marx's conception of how, in its turn, the superstructure influences the basis. His interpretation of Marx's view of free will and determination does not seem, again, to do justice to Marx.

But when these or other criticisms are made it must be said quite clearly that this is an extremely well-written, sympathetic, well-informed and, indeed, warm study of the young Marx.

Professor Delfgaauw writes as a Christian, but he is strongly critical of many of the studies of Marxism that appear to him biased and hostile (like some of those appearing in West Germany). His own attitude, he writes, is that:

> "it is a fact that Marxism has spread over a large part of the world in a relatively short space of time. Power and fear alone do not explain this phenomenon; we must become aware of the spiritual significance and value of Marxism. We just cannot say that goodness, truth, justice, and freedom exist only on this side of the iron curtain . . .".

Christians, the Professor thinks, must study Marxism and must ask themselves:

> "what in Marxist theory and practice can we accept? What is crucial for the contemporary Christian. . . . We need a dialogue between Marxism and Christianity—a Christianity, that is, which we twentieth-century West Europeans can understand as such".

This is not one of those fashionable studies that attempts to separate or to set against each other the views of the young and of the older Marx. And the Professor rejects a West German accusation that the Soviet people have neglected the study of the young Marx. Particularly interesting is his treatment of alienation, of the humanism of Marxism, of Marxism and atheism.

Marx's atheism, he writes, was "a refusal to escape from the world" and "cannot be separated from his humanism . . .".

The discussion with Marxists on the matter of religion, he continues, is not merely a theoretical question. Such a discussion is only really possible, he thinks:

> "when Christians can *in fact* show that religion isn't primarily a turning away from the world, but rather can even be a dedication to the world; and more, that religion doesn't involve the oppression of one class by another, but rather demands equal rights for all men".

An Appendix includes a most interesting letter from the nineteen-year-old student Marx to his father, which, like the rest of the book is excellently translated.

Books to Come

The new edition of George Thomson's famous book *Aeschylus and Athens*, which was announced in these notes some months ago, was delayed owing to last-minute difficulties at the binders. Lawrence and Wishart have now got it on sale, however, in hardback at 42s. and in a paperback edition at 21s.

Lawrence and Wishart are announcing some very interesting books for later in the year. One of these is the memoirs of Wal Hannington, which will be

[1] Bernard Delfgaauw, *The Young Marx*, Sheed & Ward, Stagbooks, 11s. 6d.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

published under the appropriate title *Never on our Knees*. Hannington was writing these memoirs up to the time of his death, and had completed the work all save the final chapter. They contain, as one would expect, superb material on the unemployed struggles between the wars. But of tremendous interest too are Wal Hannington's recollections of his earlier days in the Labour movement, and of his work as an engineering worker and then as an AEU organiser after the war. There will be sixteen pages of photographs.

Another book will be *Folk Song in England*, by A. L. Lloyd. This represents the fruits of years of work by one of the world's leading authorities on folk song—for which, incidentally, the author has been awarded a grant by the Arts Council. On a very different theme will be a most informative book specially written for English readers by one of the Soviet Union's leading economists—*The Aims and Methods of Soviet Planning*, by Mikhail Bor. This will be specially useful in view of the vast confusion spread recently by the capitalist press about the economic reforms in the Soviet Union and the introduction there of "the profit motive". Without either mathematics or jargon, Milkhail Bor explains in lucid and objective detail how the Soviet people are now planning their economy. The book will include a short introductory note by Maurice Dobb.

In the cheaper price-range will be *The Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain*, by Robin Page Arnot, written for the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution; *Introduction to Neo-Colonialism*, by Jack Woddis; and a very attractive paperback of William Morris, produced in collaboration with Seven Seas Books, Berlin, containing *News from Nowhere*, *A Dream of John Ball* and the narrative poem *The Pilgrims of Hope*.

Again in the cheaper price-range, and surely destined to be a best seller, will be *The Dark Days in Ghana*, by President Kwame Nkrumah. This is Nkrumah's first-hand account of the events of the coup in Ghana.

Finally, and thanks to the efforts of the History Group of the Communist Party, a very informative Marxist bibliography is being published—*Marxism and History*, edited by Lionel Munby and Ernst Wangermann. This will list original books and articles in journals by British writers who have either employed or been largely influenced by the Marxist method in the study of history.

Marxism and Criticism

There are signs that the discussion on "Marxism and Criticism", which was opened by Mike Long's article in the November 1966 issue of *Marxism Today*, is likely to last long and bring up for examination all sorts of problems involved in the Marxism approach to art. We have already a whole number of contributions awaiting publication, and would welcome more.

In this connection may we recommend a contribution on this subject by Gaylord LeRoy, Professor of English at Temple University, which was originally read as a paper at a symposium organised by the American Institute for Marxist Studies, and has now been published by the Aims as an Occasional Paper.[2]

> "If you use the terms realism and modernism as if they meant simply good and bad, you inevitably adapt a censorious tone—so you have a kind of criticism that discharges its function by saying, 'Here you have one more book you can strike off your list'. The critic, a Puritan sobersides with Engels under his arm instead of a Testament, looks out with gloomy conviction on the depravity of the age. . . . The tone is objectionable also because the very ordering of experience in any true work of art constitutes an achievement."

Professor LeRoy is treating, in his own words "the question of the cognitive function of art and the attitude of Marxist criticism towards questions of form, the concept of realism in a general sense, the debatable concept of modernism, and finally (briefly) the theory of socialist realism".

At times one has a certain feeling that in his efforts to define such terms as "realism", "socialist realism" and "modernism" he is rather more concerned to fit modern art, in all its richness and complexity, into defined categories, than to use his great critical talents to develop the understanding and appreciation of modern art. But at times he shows great wisdom in warning against the over-simplification and abuse of such categories.

The question of the Marxist approach to aesthetics, the role of the Marxist critic, is the subject of much study, discussion and debate amongst Marxists all over the world. It is good that this is so—for dogmatism in the past did very much harm in this field, and did much to weaken the important contribution that Marxism has to make.

The World in 1966

Those of our readers who can find their way about in the German language might like to know of a new and most useful kind of Yearbook just issued by *Dietz Verlag*, Berlin. It is called *Die Welt 1966, Daten, Fakten, Informationen des Jahres 1965* (The World in 1966—Facts, Figures and Information about 1965[3]) and is issued by the German Institute

[2] Gaylord C. LeRoy, *Marxism and Modern Literature*, AIMS, 1967, $1.00.

[3] It can be obtained either through Central Books Ltd., 37 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1, or through Collet's Bookshop, 66 Charing Cross Road, W.C.2.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Contemporary History in the German Democratic Republic.

This is a new venture, the series having begun with 1964 and issued a year ago.

It is divided into a number of sections. The first, called "International Review", deals in the main with the struggle between the two world systems and between imperialism and the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This section contains a most valuable world economic survey giving facts and figures about comparative growth rates for the countries united in Comecon and in the European Common Market, especially detailed figures about the development of different branches of the economy in each of the socialist countries as compared with the main capitalist countries, as well as figures dealing with the economic development of the newly independent states.

A further section deals with the United Nations and outlines all the questions discussed by that body in 1965—and most interesting reading it is, giving a spot-light on all the explosive political problems facing the world today.

Other sections deal with the "German Question", the "National Liberation Movement—the Developing Countries" and this is followed by a section on the "Imperialist System".

The main part of the book is devoted to outlining the chief political events which took place in every country in the world in 1965 including a section on Great Britain which reflects the thoroughness of the analysis made throughout. Facts and figures about the main branches of industry, a detailed record of strikes and demonstrations, an analysis of the economic problems and the state of different branches of the economy, the results of the 1965 municipal elections, foreign policy etc. are laid out in chronological order. Altogether a most useful arsenal of facts and figures for every socialist and fighter for peace.

Socialists in the German Parliament

Dietz Verlag, Berlin, are to be most heartily congratulated on reproducing a historic book throwing light on the German Socialist Movement in its splendid, early days.

It is *Die Sozialdemokratie im Deutschen Reichstag* (The Social Democrats in the German Reichstag) originally issued in 1909 and here faithfully reproduced in the original German Gothic script. It contains four articles dealing with the Parliamentary activity of the German Social Democrats at different periods—1871-74; 1874-76; 1877-89; and 1890-93. The first three of these were written by August Bebel, a turner, and one of the greatest of the early leaders of the German Socialist Movement and its outstanding Parliamentary tribune. The last is written jointly by a group of Socialist MPs of the time.

A further article reproduces the Election Manifestoes issued by the German Social Democrats for the first three elections of the Reichstag held under Bismarck's Anti-Socialist laws which operated from 1878-90. These were all drafted by Bebel's great co-fighter and the close friend of Marx and Engels—Wilhelm Liebknecht.

The activity described in this book took place during the lifetime of Marx and Engels and was undertaken in the closest liaison with them, especially with Engels, who, after Marx's death in 1883, worked especially closely and actively with the developing German Socialist Movement.

August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were the first socialists to sit in any German (or other) Parliament. Their experience, the way they saw the parliamentary struggle in relation to the fight for socialism, is therefore of immense historical interest and importance.

As this book shows, Bebel and Liebknecht made a tremendous contribution to the elaboration of the theory and practice of revolutionary parliamentarianism and to outlining what the role of Socialist MPs can be.

Supported up to the hilt by both Marx and Engels, they won the doubters in the German Socialist movement to the understanding of the need for Socialists to wage the class struggle inside Parliament as well. They fought against both "pure parliamentarianism" and against "anti-parliamentarianism". They were clear about the connection between the battle inside Parliament and the mass struggle outside. They fought magnificently in Parliament on the main issues facing the people, especially against the developing German militarism, against the ever increasing size of the arms bill, against attacks on civil rights, for the needs of the workers like a 10-hour day, protection for women and children in industry. These questions were consequently brought to public attention in the sharpest possible way and helped develop the struggle for them by the Labour movement.

Back Numbers of Marxism Today

We are having a considerable demand for back issues of *Marxism Today*. This is both a good sign and a valuable source of much-needed income.

If readers who have copies, which they do not want, of runs or individual copies of the 1957-64 period (Volumes I to VIII) we should be very grateful if they would let us have them.

We are also short of the March issue of Vol. X (1966). This contained John Lewis' article which opened the "Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism" and there are continual requests for it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1917: The Overthrow of Tsardom

Andrew Rothstein

Part I. The Gathering of the Storm

1. Illusion and Reality

ON the morning of March 16th, 1917, a notice was put up in the Junior Common Room of my college (I had just come up with a scholarship) by an Irish Nationalist aristocrat, calling an urgent meeting "to consider the cataclysm". This was not wholly undergraduate extravagance; it well reflected the utter astonishment of the British people at the shouting headlines in the newspapers that day—"Successful Russian Revolution", "Abdication of Tsar" and (a reassuring touch in *The Times*) "A 'Win-the-War' Movement". Such was the first intimation that the press stories, ever since August 1914, about the Russians being heart and soul behind their Little Father, with all political differences set aside in the cause of defeating the enemy, were poppycock, to put it mildly.

But they were what the Establishment had wanted the people to believe. When the Tsar replaced one set of reactionary Ministers by another, after major defeats of the Russian Army in the early summer of 1915, this was "indicative of a remarkable change in Russian political life", wrote the *Annual Register*, then as now the distilled essence of British reaction. Although there had been much discontent at the high price of food, it wrote in 1916, "the large majority of the Russian nation were heartily in favour of the war, and were prepared to make great sacrifices in order to prosecute the campaign to a victorious conclusion". Now its authors were faced with the dismal prospect of having to write (in the 1917 *Register*) that "Tsardom passed out of existence amid a chorus of execration".

The hardheaded world of the City found itself in no better case. After describing, in July 1914, the revolutionary feeling prevalent in Russia, the *Economist* by October 17th was announcing, in the words of its Petrograd correspondent: "Russia is solid for the war". The establishment of War Industry Committees, under pressure from the Russian capitalists, meant that "representation of the people and the interests concerned are taken into partnership with the bureaucracy and the Tsar" (August 7th, 1915). After twelve months of criticism of the Tsarist Government's incapacity and refusal to make reforms, in the Duma, nevertheless the speeches "leave no doubt as to the unanimity of all parties in prosecuting the war" (March 4th, 1916). Although the Socialists had been fighting the police in the streets of the capital in July 1914, "political differences have been temporarily effaced by the supreme effort of the nation against the common foe. . . . The whole Russian nation, even the revolutionaries, is fully supporting the war and the Government" (July 29th, 1916). And, on October 21st, 1916—the day on which a political strike of 45 large factories (67,000 workers) ended in Petrograd, and five days before another, which brought out 180,000 workers, began—the *Economist* correspondent wrote: "Harm done to the economic life of the country by the war is likely to be less felt in an agricultural country like Russia than elsewhere in Western Europe."

Idyllic Picture

On the very eve of the great event, Harold Williams—one of the best known British correspondents in Russia—had drawn this idyllic picture:

> "The street demonstrations are of an unusually mild character wholly unlike any demonstrations I have ever seen in Russia. Crowds wander about the streets, mostly women and boys with a sprinkling of workmen. Here and there windows are broken, and a few bakers' shops looted. But on the whole the crowds are remarkably good-tempered . . . Occasionally when mobs on the Nevsky get too dense the troops gently disperse them. There is a curious placidity about the whole thing. . . . The main current of the movement is not revolutionary. There is nothing like a popular uprising. It is simply an unusually insistent demand for a vigorous solution of the food problem." (*Daily Chronicle*, March 13th, 1917.)

How were the newspapers now to explain the thunderbolt of a revolution in the largest land Empire on earth, after all this?

Their reporters did all they could to help out. The revolution really was what *The Times* had called it: the Russians had overthrown their Emperor because his Government wasn't doing enough to win the war. The Liberal and Tory newspapers competed with one another in their reassurances. "The one great anxiety that clouded the future of the war is being removed", wrote Williams. "Henceforth Russia is in heart and soul for the war, and the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war only", the Liberal Russian journalist Michael Farbman assured the readers of the *Daily Chronicle*, the same day. "Henceforth the full strength of the Russian nation will be engaged on the side of the Allies", said the leading article of the *Daily News*. The revolution "will strengthen Russia in the fuller conduct of the war", echoed the *Manchester Guardian*. *The Times* editorial noted "the manifest eagerness of all parties that Russia should continue to wage the war with even greater vigour". The other Tory press went on in the same way.

Moreover, the last thing people should imagine was that some unruly mob had made the Revolution —"the great unwashed", as the upper classes in Britain still from time to time described the mass of the workers (who, like the Russians, still had no vote). It was the Duma which had done it—Russia's unrepresentative Parliament chosen in indirect elections from which nine-tenths of the population of the Empire were excluded, under a system in fact which provided a built-in majority for the tiny land-owning class: and with only powers to advise and criticise the Ministers appointed by the Tsar. "Briefly, the garrison of Petrograd has revolted and given its adherence to the Duma" (*Daily Chronicle*). The revolution was the result of "a collision between the Government and the Duma" (*Daily News*). "The parliamentary leaders, with the people and the Army at their back, have carried out a *coup d'état*" (*The Times*): and so on. In fairness, one must say that one discordant voice was heard that morning and the next, in the *Manchester Guardian:*

> "Reading between the lines, it is apparent that the initiative in the revolutionary movement came from the working classes. They acted, as they have acted before, by means of a general strike, but on this occasion their position was secured because they had the army with them. . . . The soldiers came in on the popular side, for the most part, without their officers."

The Working Class

In at any rate the anti-war Socialist weeklies (Labour had no daily paper during the 1914-18 war) there was no hesitation. The British Socialist Party's *Call* had repeatedly during previous months, reported workers' struggles in Russia, food shortages, approach of a crisis. Now (March 22nd) it ridiculed the assertions that the revolution was due to "the ardent desire of the people to win the war" and that it was "born of the united forces of the Duma and the Army. "The real truth is that the revolution was begun and carried out with the utmost success by the masses of the people themselves against the previous exhortations of the Duma, who had feared nothing so much as a revolution". The Independent Labour Party's *Labour Leader*, which had the previous week printed their leader Philip Snowden's survey saying —"The country is seething with unrest . . . Petrograd is in a state of revolution," now was more hesitant in defining its attitude, but printed a resolution of a meeting of the Russian Socialist Groups in London, pointing out that "the most active part in the revolution was played by the revolutionary working class". George Lansbury, in his weekly *Herald*, wrote: "The feverish anxiety with which the British press strives to prove that everyone in Russia is pro-war is clear evidence to me that it is not so"—and the Editorial Notes quote the same resolution of the Russian Socialists in London.

Thus at the very moment of the March Revolution in Russia two diametrically opposite versions of its origin were launched: and in substance they continue to circulate, fifty years later. Moreover, in capitalist countries, where obscurantist writers can be financed on a large scale, their books subsidised in various ways and publishers assured of a good guaranteed sale to universities, public libraries and those who know no better, the reactionary party has a very considerable advantage. All the more important, therefore, to ascertain which of the two has truth on its side.

2. The Russian Working Class in 1914

In the last months before the first world war the Russian working class was engaged in mounting an ever fiercer struggle—and with the Bolshevik Party more and more recognised, by friend and foe alike, as its chosen leader.

Strikes in Tsarist Russia might start for purely economic demands, but the savage attacks on the strikers by police and troops made them political in spite of themselves. However, these years saw an increasing proportion of strikes with political demands from the very start. In 1912 there were 550,000 political strikers out of a total of 725,000: in the first six months of 1914, out of more than 1,300,000 strikers, over a million struck for political reasons—the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, January 22nd, 1905 (over a quarter of a million), the suspension of workers' deputies from the Duma in April (over 100,000), over half a million on May Day. The *Annual Register* for 1914 itself wrote of the "enormous increase in so-called political strikes, the work of a clandestine organisation which threatened to paralyse trade and industry . . ." On July 4th, 90,000 struck in protest at the shooting of over 50 workers by the police at a mass meeting in the great Putilov engineering works and shipyard: by July 7th, 130,000 were on strike in St. Petersburg alone (with much fighting with the police, and barricades up in a number of places); over 50,000 struck in Moscow and another 50,000 in Riga, 20,000 in Warsaw, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scores of thousands elsewhere.[1] This great movement drew in masses of students, particularly on May 1st, in the largest cities: as well as sailors of the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets and two Army battalions in Central Asia.

Bolshevik Advance

The Bolshevik Party, in the last two years before the war, moved steadily to leadership of these struggles: the evidence may be briefly summarised here.[2] Their daily paper *Pravda*, started on May 5th, 1912, won big support in the largest factories, far outdistancing the Menshevik paper. In the October 1912 elections to the Duma, the Bolsheviks won all six seats reserved for the workers (in the most industrially advanced provinces). In April 1913, they won a decisive victory over the Mensheviks in the elections to the St. Petersburg committee of the Metal Workers' Union, and two months later a similar victory in the Moscow Printers' Union. By the summer of 1914 most of the few legal St. Petersburg unions and all the local unions existing legally in Moscow had elected Bolshevik leaderships (in spite of constant police persecution) and the same applied to workmen's clubs and educational societies in the main industrial centres. In March 1914, the Bolsheviks won sensational victories in elections to the newly created insurance committees at St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Kharkov, Odessa and other cities.

Well might the Department of Police, in its report to the Minister of the Interior for 1912 and up to April 1913, already write:[3]

> The most energetic and lively element in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the most capable of tireless struggle, resistance and constant organisation is the element (the organisations and the people) concentrated around Lenin. . . . The Leninist fraction is always better organised than any other, stronger in its single-mindedness, more inventive in carrying its ideas into the workers' ranks and in adapting itself to the political situation . . . Summing up the present state of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, it should be said that of all the revolutionary organisations existing in Russia and abroad, the only one which has not fallen behind the present revival in the workers' movement, which has managed to pull itself together sufficiently, establish its slogans and its connections, and theoretically and practically keep up with the general animation is the Bolshevik fraction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party."

And on June 30th, 1914, the colonel of gendarmerie in charge of security in St. Petersburg reported to the Minister that, in contrast to the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary papers which ran at a constant deficit, the "Leninist fraction's" *Pravda* (at that time called *Labour Pravda* on account of its repeated suppression under other titles) was printing 40,000 copies daily—50 per cent more than the other two combined—and had managed "finally to establish itself, more than cover its expenses, and does not touch at all its 'iron fund', which has now reached a total of over 20,000 roubles."

This influence and the movement behind it were not blotted out when war broke out. *Pravda* had been raided and closed down as early as July 8th, 1914; in many places the legal organisations in Bolshevik hands were also raided and their officials arrested. But the Bolshevik local committees in a number of others issued tens of thousands of leaflets denouncing the war and the Tsarist Government and preaching revolution. On the day war was declared (August 1st, 1914) 27,000 workers in 21 St. Petersburg factories—including some of the largest—struck against the war and demonstrated in the streets. In Moscow there were strikes at the big "Three Hills" textile factory and elsewhere: 10,000 workers were on strike at Baku, 1,500 at the Tver Railway Carriage Works; in the Perm province there were armed conflicts between mobilised workers and the authorities in the course of which dozens of workers were killed or wounded.[4]

Outbreak of War

However, this was the vanguard of more politically conscious workers, directly influenced by *Pravda*, or other Bolshevik literature, or by the Bolshevik groups in their midst. Most workers throughout the Empire—especially the majority engaged in small-scale enterprise in the lesser towns—were for the time being silenced, either by mobilisation or by the warlike propaganda campaign launched by the authorities: while the police made wholesale raids and arrests among those suspected of being members of the "Leninist" organisation. Between August and December 1914, there were only 70 strikes, 8 of them with political aims: of the 37,000 strikers, just over 4,000 put forward political, i.e. anti-war, demands. The

[1] These figures differ slightly from some used in an earlier article in *Marxism Today* (June 1960): they are taken from more precise statistics (*Outlines of the History of the October Revolution*, in Russian, edited by Prof. M. N. Pokrovsky, 1927, Vol. I, p. 328).

[2] It was given in greater detail in the article of June 1960, mentioned earlier.

[3] The document, taken from the police archives, was published by the Soviet historical journal *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*, No. 2 (14), 1923; the same applies to the document which followed.

[4] There is a survey of archives reports on these and other cases in the new and monumental work (in Russian) by Academician I. I. Mintz, *History of the Great October*, Vol. I, "Overthrow of the Autocracy", pp. 209-213.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

secret police were triumphant. "Thanks to the consistent and systematic liquidation of the most active Party workers", the Petrograd division reported to the Department of Police on December 11th, 1914, there had not been a regular Bolshevik leading committee in the capital since the outbreak of war. Such committees as had been formed were "self-appointed, consisting of chance groupings of old Party workers" (!) and only in a few sections of the city was there "underground Party work in the form of factory groups and unimportant industrial groups"—the most active being in the Vyborg quarter", consisting of especially advanced and 'class conscious' metal workers".

But these "exceptions"—men and women educated by *Pravda* and in the Bolshevik factory branches—were just the indestructible element which were inaccessible either to the spies of the police or to their comprehension (as they have been, ever since, to the successors and pupils of the Tsarist police among the historians).

Much has been written, and a good deal known through translation, of Lenin's immediate branding of the war of 1914 as an imperialist war, and of the firm manifesto of the Bolshevik Central Committee leaders abroad, under his leadership (November 1914). The manifesto denounced the betrayal of the decisions of the International by the Social-Democratic leaders on both sides who were supporting the war, criticised the centrists who refused to break with such supporters, called for a struggle which would turn the imperialist war into a civil war (including the defeat of one's own government) and demanded the formation of a new revolutionary international, cleared of the opportunists. This became the very backbone of all later Bolshevik activity during the war.

Opposition to the War

What is less known is the fact that, during $3\frac{1}{2}$ months in which the Bolshevik organisations had no contact with their leaders abroad, they went into action, wherever and whenever they could, with essentially the same analysis and conclusions. Denunciations of the war and calls for the overthrow of Tsardom were issued in leaflet form, apart from Petrograd, Moscow and Riga, in Kharkov, Kiev, Yekaterinoslav, Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) and towns in the Urals, Caucasus and elsewhere: 70 leaflets in about 400,000 copies. Party conferences (illegal) were held in several areas.[5] Moreover, the Bolshevik Duma deputies, after holding a number of meetings with their constituents which adopted anti-war resolutions, induced the Menshevik deputies to join with them on August 8th in a declaration denouncing the war as the work of the ruling classes, and opposing any support of Tsardom: and in walking out when the war credits were put to the vote. The Bolsheviks—not the Mensheviks—followed this up in October by sending a stinging reply, preliminarily discussed by meetings of active Party workers in the main industrial centres, to a telegram from the Belgian pro-war Socialist Vandervelde, appealing to them to support the war "against Prussian Junkerdom".

The Bolshevik deputies were arrested at the beginning of November (and sentenced in February to exile in a penal settlement for life); but not before the secret police had once again reported: "It must be admitted that in Petrograd the Leninist trend has the dominant influence in views on the war and on the attitude of Social Democrats to the war". The documents produced by the prosecution at the trial of the Deputies, and the speeches of some of them—reprinted in some of the Petrograd capitalist press—carried these views far and wide.

Thus, however great the losses that had been suffered, and however muffled was the voice of the Bolsheviks for the time being, the most politically active sections of the working class (and of other sections of the working people) had had a plain intimation that there was another way of looking at events than that which was served up to them, in defence of the war, by the united front from the Tsar to most of the Mensheviks.

3. The War and its Miseries

Little by little—but much faster than in the more developed imperialist countries—the Russian people as a whole began to learn the same lesson, to varying degrees and at varying rates according (in the main, and individuals apart) to their class situation.

The Tsarist Government mobilised about four million men immediately, and over ten million more in the next $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. During those years the Russian forces played a major part in the war. In August 1914, two Russian armies invaded East Russia, only to be almost annihilated the following month. Other Russian armies had inflicted equally heavy defeats on those of Austria Hungary, and had occupied Eastern Galicia and Bukovina, nearing the Carpathian foothills. In the following months German and Russian armies fought bloody battles in Russian Poland. In November, December and January Russia's armies in the Caucasus inflicted shattering defeats on Germany's Turkish ally and invaded Turkey. In these struggles, apart from huge losses in manpower, the Tsarist army almost exhausted its reserve stocks

[5] Many details, taken either from police records of raids and seizures of literature or from recollections of old revolutionaries, were already published in 1927, in the *Outlines* mentioned earlier (pp. 344-6); further researches have revealed much additional material (Mintz, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-5, 219-220).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of guns, rifles, machine guns and munitions. Then, after further Russian advances in Galicia, the Germans in May 1915 broke through the Russian front there, and in five months in practically incessant battles drove the Russian army out of most of the Austro-Hungarian territory it had gained, and occupied south-west Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and part of Latvia. There began many months of exhausting trench warfare. In June 1916 a further offensive of the south-western Russian armies against Austro-Hungary once again brought them, at great cost to both sides, back to the Carpathians; while another offensive carried the Caucasus armies deep into the Black Sea regions of Turkey.

These huge encounters had exacted a fearful price. A document of the "Special Committee to Examine and Combine Defence Establishments", dated November 1916, stated that up till then 5½ million had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner, while 9 million were at the front or in other army units. Apart from those in occupied territory (2 million), physically unfit (5 million) or engaged in industry or on the railways (3 million), there were now left only 1,500,000 fit men available for call-up—out of 26 million men between 18 and 40 who had been capable of bearing arms in July 1914.

The call-up itself had deprived agriculture of 47 per cent of its able-bodied males, and industry of some 40 per cent of its workers. The countryside, in addition, had had 35 per cent of its cattle and 10 per cent of its horses requisitioned or purchased. Agriculture, moreover, was hit by the violent reduction in supply of machines and implements, partly because of the almost total (96 per cent) stoppage of imports (chiefly from Germany before the war), partly through the switching of metal working factories to war production: home output of farm machinery fell by 75 per cent. Output of bread grains fell from an average of 45 million tons in the five pre-war years to 35.5 millions in 1916-17.[6]

Economic Breakdown

Transport was also profoundly affected. By the end of 1916 the number of railway engines available had fallen from 20,000 to under 17,000 and of goods trucks from 540,000 to 460,000; in addition, 17 per cent of the engines and nearly 7 per cent of the railway trucks needed urgent repair. This decline was partly due to the great losses sustained during the German advance in the relatively industrialised areas of Poland and the Baltic provinces; but the evacuation of millions of refugees and much property in face of the German advance, and the enormous requirements of the army in moving troops and supplies to the fronts, with the heavy concentration of rolling stock on deliveries of fuel and materials to the war factories (the last two items alone diverted one-third of all engines and trucks), all imposed on the railways a strain which only a fully adequate repair and production industry could relieve. But industry was less and less capable of meeting this need.

Industry had, as a result of the German advance, lost over 20 per cent of its productive capacity in any case; but the transport crisis, which created acute shortages in deliveries of coal and raw material, and at the same time inadequate output of iron and steel[7] (in August 1916 monthly war needs were assessed at 300,000 tons, but only 250,000 tons were being delivered) were progressively making matters worse. At the beginning of January 1917, Rodzyanko, the President of the Duma, submitted to the Tsar a long list of factories which had been closed down for lack of fuel.

The worst aspect of this general economic breakdown was a growing crisis in supplies of food and other necessities to the people—mainly because grain which was available could not be moved (as also was the case with kerosene) but also because of the reduction in output of the textile industry, through lack either of raw material or labour. By October 1916 its output was only 80 per cent of pre-war—*but the lion's share of that output was reserved* for the armed forces. As regards food, the situation in the large cities by the end of 1916 was disastrous.

No more than 3,300 wagon loads of grain were delivered to Moscow in December 1916, as against a standard of 10,200. Petrograd frequently received an even smaller proportion. The army by the spring of 1916 was receiving only one-third of its pre-war meat ration. The authorities realised what this meant. In 1915 the Department of Police registered 684 food riots in European Russia alone; in the first five months of 1916 it recorded 510. In a report to the Minister of the Interior in the second half of that year, it said: "The food breakdown is being combined with the political struggle to threaten Russia with a collapse such as Russian history has never known"[8].

Harsh Conditions

It was not only the shortages which enraged the working class, but the spectacle of frantic profiteering and idle luxury, openly flaunted by the side of head-

[6] Lyashchenko, *History of the National Economy of Russia* (New York, 1949), pp. 764-6.

[7] Sidorov, *Impact of the Imperialist War on the Economy of Russia*, in the *Outlines*, edited by Pokrovsky noted earlier (1927), Vol. I, pp. 130-134, 100-115.

[8] Sidorov, op. cit., pp. 117-124. Mintz, op. cit., pp. 329-332, gives a striking summary of a mass of contemporary official reports and later research.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

long rises in prices which put even the bare necessities beyond the reach of the people. *Industry and Trade*, the main journal of the business world, spoke in October 1916 of "the threatening exhaustion of the working class", produced by "the extraordinary increase in the intensity of labour as a result of war conditions, coupled with the complication of the food problem for the wide masses of the people."[9] Indeed, dividends of 20, 30 or 40 per cent became quite common in the war years for shareholders in the largest monopolies—metal working, oil, sugar, rubber and others. Parallel with these were the astronomic increases in prices. Taking the level in January 1914 as 100, they stood on January 1st, 1917, at 400 for cheap calico, 480 for cotton prints, 700 for matches, 905 for footwear. Bread in Moscow cost twice as much in January 1917 as it did three years before: beef was 3-4 times as dear and pork 4-5 times. In the provinces prices had risen still higher.[10]

But nominal wages had not risen anything like as much; and real wages were no more than 50-60 per cent of what they had been in 1913. Moreover the average working day was back to nearly 10 hours. Here the evidence of the workers' enemies is perhaps as convincing as any. In October 1916, the Petrograd secret police reported to the Department of Police that the economic position of the masses was "more than terrible". While wages had gone up for most workers by only 50 per cent—more than that only for a few categories such as skilled mechanics—food prices were up from 100 per cent to 500 per cent. "Even if we assume that wages rose by 100 per cent, food prices have gone up on the average by 300 per cent. The impossibility of securing many foodstuffs and prime necessities even for money, the loss of time while standing in queues for commodities, the increased sickness through bad feeding and anti-sanitary housing (cold and damp through lack of coal and wood fuel) and other factors have led to the workers already in their majority being ready for the most savage excesses of hunger riots."[11] And the French Ambassador, Maurice Paléologue, noted in his diary on September 29th, 1916: "The high cost of living is a cause of general suffering.

"As regards the prime necessities, the increase in prices is to three times the pre-war level: it even reaches four times for wood fuel and eggs, five times for butter and soap. The main reasons for this situation are unfortunately as deep-seated as they are evident: the closing of foreign markets, the blocking-up of the railways, the disorder and corruption in the administration." On October 24th he noted that the food situation was worse: "The people are suffering from hunger"—and "in the factories leaflets pass from hand to hand, inciting the workers to strike and demand peace". A week later Paléologue put down: "For two days all the factories of Petrograd have been on strike. The workers left the workshops without formulating any reason, on a simple watchword coming from a mysterious committee."[12]

The committee was the Petrograd organisation of the Bolshevik Party.

4. Bolsheviks and Workers in Wartime

By the autumn of 1915, after all the repressions, mass arrests and trials, the Bolsheviks had reconstituted the framework of their underground organisation. While the leadership, in the person of Lenin, Zinoviev and Krupskaya (as secretary) were functioning in Switzerland, Shlyapnikov as Central Committee member had gone secretly to Russia and reconstituted a "Russian Bureau" of the Central Committee, composed of members of the illegal Petersburg Committee (the Bolsheviks kept the old name, as a symbol of their rejection of the jingo manoeuvre which substituted a "Slavonic" name for the "Teutonic" one) and other active workers. This of course was done by co-optation: in the course of 1915 arrests necessitated the formation of a second Bureau, and in the summer of 1916 a third.

The people whom Shlyapnikov brought in had all had their political training in practical underground work, particularly in the factories and the students' organisations, and most particularly since *Pravda* had been started. (In the same way—in spite of constant arrests, owing to the penetration of police informers—city committees were incessantly set up and were able to function for a time in Moscow in April 1915, August 1915, October 1915, February 1916, August 1916, November and December 1916. Much the same was the picture elsewhere. During 1914-15 the Samara (now Kuibyshev) committee had to be reconstituted after police raids at least six times, and in August 1916 a committee was elected at a regional party conference which functioned right up to the March Revolution. Committees went on functioning in Estonia, Latvia and the Caucasus.

In all, committees functioned—with occasional breaks after police raids—in 29 cities of the Russian Empire during the war, publishing leaflets, illegal papers, even occasionally legal printed papers

[9] Quoted by Mintz, op. cit., p. 145.

[10] Mintz, op. cit., pp. 330-1.

[11] A Soviet historical journal, *Krasny Arhiv*, reproduced this report in its No. 17 (1926).

[12] *La Russie des Tsars*, Vol. III (1922), pp. 36, 60, 66.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(surviving for a few issues), and conducting constant agitation in the factories, the army and navy, and among the students. About 90 local groups and committees took part in this: they reached 75 towns in all. A total of 600 leaflets, with a print of some two millions, were issued between July 1914 and March 1917.[13]

The most outstanding case—and historically the most decisive—was the Petersburg committee. It had to be reconstituted at least 30 times during the war, and at least 500 of its most active members and local members were arrested. This was apart from the thousand arrested in connection with raids on the 19 illegal printing establishments which it set up in the course of those years, and with the distribution of the leaflets produced. But the persistent groundwork done in the previous years, especially by the publication of *Pravda* as the voice of the workers by hand and brain, had created a vast reserve of support on which the Committee and its supporters could draw. Every possible occasion was taken for issuing leaflets, and holding short meetings in the biggest works.

In April 1917, V. Schmidt, speaking on behalf of the Petersburg Committee then functioning at the first All-Russian Party Conference, reported that 90 leaflets with a total print of 300,000 had been issued by the Committee during the war: but this was before any fundamental research was done, and today it is known that at least 160 leaflets were issued in Petrograd during the 32 months of war up to the beginning of March 1917, with a total output of close on 500,000 copies. These leaflets penetrated all over the country, and their origin was no more "mysterious" than their effect. (In April 1916 the secret police reported: "Among the Petrograd Social-Democrats the 'Bolshevik Leninists', with the Petersburg Committee as their leading body, were especially noteworthy for their activity and fighting spirit. . . . A number of repressive measures adopted by the Security Branch disturbed the plans of the Bolshevik-Leninists, but they invariably restored what had been broken up, as far as possible came together again and refilled the ranks of their leaders".) At the beginning of January 1917, the police came into possession of the one and only set of minutes of the Petersburg Committee which have been preserved. They showed that there were 11 borough committees, 3 national committees (representing Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian members living in the capital) and 1 student committee in existence and working. The committee discussed an important political question—recent German "peace proposals"—drafts of a leaflet on the subject, arrangements for meetings in the factories and a demonstration, and various matters of organisation.[14] No wonder that in January 1917, the secret police was once again reporting with regret that "the leading collective of the Bolshevik Social-Democrats has still remained at large and continued its underground work, with the firm intention of displaying to the Government authorities its vitality and the small effectiveness of the measures of the investigating body". And this lament, though uttered in connection with Petrograd, could well have applied to a number of other cities.

Strikes

In point of fact, this "firm intention" had been demonstrated a number of times during the previous two years, loudly enough to reverberate throughout Russia despite the ruthless censorship. When the Bolshevik Duma deputies were arrested, the Petersburg Committee called for meetings and a one-day protest strike on November 12th. Only a few factories struck in Petrograd, but other strikes and meetings took place in Moscow, Kharkov and other cities. 197 students were arrested after a meeting in Petrograd University. When the deputies were put on trial, in February 1915, there were more strikes and student meetings, though still on a small scale (less than 5,000 struck in different parts of Russia). Strikes called for the anniversary of the Lena Goldfields shootings (April 17th, 1915) were still small, and 35,000 struck on May Day in response to the Bolshevik call.

Then, from April to November 1915, there was a big increase in strikes in many parts of European Russia, mostly for economic reasons, as the various miseries of the war began to make themselves felt. Over 460,000 workers struck. Moreover, whereas wider issues played a small part at first—perhaps 15,000 involved in political strikes (up to June out of 181,000 strikers)—the situation changed abruptly when 100 workers were shot dead on August 10th at Ivanovo-Voznesensk, where a demonstration of 4,000 textile strikers was demanding the release of a group of active Bolsheviks, arrested in connection with the distribution of a Party leaflet. Immediately, political protest strikes broke out in Moscow, Petrograd, Tula, Nijni-Novgorod, Kharkov and other industrial towns—the first on a large scale since the outbreak of war. In August and September, out of nearly 170,000 strikers (260 strikes), over 130,000 took part in 165 political strikes, a number

[13] A very full summary of the materials gathered over the years from official archives and memoirs is contained in chapter 4 of Mintz, op. cit. (pp. 253-302).

[14] The text of this striking document was published in Fleyer, *The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks in the War Years 1914-1917* (in Russian), 1927: he also printed the text of the leaflet issued, exposing the German plans and calling for the overthrow of Tsardom and an end to the war (pp. 104-8, 204-6).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of them provoked by the arrest of 30 Bolshevik workers at the Putilov works. In all, the period from August to November 1915, produced 340 strikes with nearly a quarter of a million participants. The near lull created by the outbreak of war had been broken for good—and this had important consequences.

On September 2nd, 1915, General Frolov, commanding the Petrograd Military District, issued an order threatening trial of strikers by court-martial, with penal servitude as the punishment: he launched for the first time the charge—later to become familiar—that the strikes were being financed by "German money". The Petersburg Committee, in a reply manifesto, reminded Frolov of the widely publicised charge that German gold was going to General Staff officers, and that strikers were getting, not gold, but prison, lockouts and hunger: and it called on the soldiers not to be fooled, but to join the working class when it rises for decisive battle with the Tsarist Government and turn their arms "against the real enemies of Russia, the Frolovs, the police, the gendarmes and the whole Tsarist gang".

"Workers' Groups"

It was in this atmosphere that there took place, in September 1915, elections in the factories to "Workers' Groups" of the War Industry Committees. These committees had been set up in the summer after the heavy defeats of the Tsarist army, to try and bring order out of chaos in war industry, or, more precisely, as a means of bringing the industrial capitalists into closer association with the Tsarist bureaucracy, now under a cloud. The bourgeoisie in turn had decided that it would be a good idea to bring a number of workers' representatives into association with them and thus with the war effort; and the opportunist parties—Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—eagerly seized on this opportunity of supporting the war, under the guise of defending the workers' interests. But in order to get the workers' representatives elected, the authorities had to allow mass meetings in the larger factories —though it was provided that the meetings could only choose "electors", and these in turn at city meetings would choose the representatives, a procedure which made easier "sifting" by the police.

The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks, at the end of August, decided to make use of the mass meetings to get publicity for the Bolshevik attitude on the war, get Bolsheviks elected as "electors" and then that the latter should at the city meetings get the latter to endorse the Bolshevik attitude. Declarations of policy were drafted for the two occasions. The subsequent proceedings brought out only too clearly, for the authorities' liking, the tremendous "vitality" of the Bolshevik organisation. At factory after factory, in Petrograd, Bolshevik "electors" were chosen, or the Bolshevik declaration adopted, or both. 219,000 workers in factories employing 500 workers or over took part in the meetings. When the 198 "electors" assembled on October 10th (10 did not turn up) 60 of them were Bolsheviks, 81 Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and 57 non-Party. But after 13 hours' discussion, the Bolsheviks' declaration was adopted by 95-81—proclaiming that "the main enemy of each people is in its own country: the enemy of the Russian people is the Tsarist autocracy, the serf-owner-minded landowners, the imperialist bourgeoisie," and that the watchword of "down with the war" should be given point by the call: "Hail the social revolution". For the same reason it would be treachery to the revolutionary internationalist principles of the working class for workers' representatives to take part in the Central War Industry Committee.

This event resounded like a thunderclap throughout the country. After a public denunciation of "outside interference" in the press by the Menshevik leader Gvozdev, the Government cancelled the elections, arrested a number of "electors" or annulled their mandates, and held a second meeting on December 12th, at which the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries denounced the proceedings and withdrew, and the Mensheviks got their men elected. But the political effect was tremendous. Thereafter the Government managed to get elections among the workers in only 76 towns out of 244 where War Industry Committees were set up—and only in 58 of these were "workers' groups" set up. Considering the methods of the Tsarist regime, this was a convincing proof of the leadership of the Bolsheviks among the most decisive sections of the workers.

This was confirmed on several outstanding occasions in 1916. On the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday", January 22nd, 70,000 workers struck at the call of the Bolsheviks—despite mass preliminary arrests of active Party workers all over the country. That month there took place elections in the factories (those with at least 200 workers) to the provincial insurance committees set up in 1914, and to the Central Insurance Council, to which only Petrograd factories had the right to elect. By January 1916, as a result of arrests, there was not a single workers' representative left in the Petrograd insurance committee, and only 3 out of 15 in the Central Insurance Council—and 2 of those were Bolsheviks. The Petersburg Committee organised a campaign based on (i) the extension of the social insurance system to the whole working class and on a non-contributory basis, (ii) the expulsion of the "War-Industry Socialists" as traitors to the working class cause. In fact, at the all-Petrograd delegate meeting on January 31st the Bolshevik declaration

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was adopted and the entire Bolshevik list elected, except for one whose name had been misprinted on the ballot paper. The Petrograd secret police in February reported that this was "a brilliant result for the Bolsheviks, crowning their election campaign and agitation", and that evidently the Insurance Council would now become "the leader of Party life in the capital". The activity of the Leninists had "reached its peak", they said.

Strikes Spread

But, while the strike wave continued to rise in general in 1916—the number of strikers rose from 557,000 the previous year to 1,038,000, 310,000 of them in political strikes as against 157,000 in 1915—the peak was yet to come. In October, 1916, the food shortage reached unprecedented acuteness, with endless queues for bread, frequent small strikes and fights with the police. The Petersburg Committee of the Bolsheviks launched a campaign of meetings in the factories to explain the origin of the crisis. On October 25th it brought out a leaflet explaining why the ruling class were carrying on the war, and calling on the working class "to raise its voice". The response was an impressive one. On October 30th 7 factories with 20,300 workers stopped: swelling daily, the strike embraced 66,600 by November 1st. Moreover, on the first day soldiers of a reserve battalion in a barracks opposite the Renault factory joined the strikers there in stoning the police: and neither they nor Cossacks who had been called out would fire on the workers. The Petersburg Committee called off the strike on November 4th.

But it was renewed four days later, when 19 sailors charged with membership of a Bolshevik organisation, and a number of soldiers arrested for their part in the strikes on October 30th, were due for court-martial. The Petersburg Committee issued a leaflet calling on the workers to "stretch out the hand of fraternal aid to our comrades in the army", and to start a three-day strike on November 8th. By November 10th 120,000 workers at 50 large works, and 10,000 in smaller factories were on strike. When the military authorities and the factory-owners ordered the closure of a number of factories, and the dismissal of the strikers, as a reprisal, the answer of the Petersburg Committee was to call for a general strike in Petrograd. By November 14th 180,000 were on strike. The lockout was called off the previous day, and the strike ended.

Bolsheviks in Fleet and Army

This was the real peak of the workers' struggle in 1916. It showed that they had begun to understand very clearly the political origin of the miseries the war had brought them: that the decisive factories, where the biggest mass of workers were concentrated, had begun to follow the Bolsheviks, and that the understanding had begun to reach the armed forces. It was just during the last stages, on November 5th, that Maurice Paléologue recorded a conversation with "a General in daily contact with the Petrograd garrison", who told him that the latter now numbered at least 170,000 men. The Ambassador asked him if it was true that these troops were "gravely contaminated by revolutionary propaganda". The general answered "in the affirmative".[15] And this was not idle talk. The Department of Police had a wide intelligence network in the armed forces, and reported in the summer of 1916 that the revolutionary leaflets of the Petersburg Committee were reaching the army and navy on active service "in considerable quantity". In fact the Petersburg Committee had set up a services organisation which had contacts with Party groups in companies and regiments at Kronstadt, Reval and half a dozen other garrison towns. In the Baltic Fleet nearly every warship had its Bolshevik group, and there was a "Chief Ships' Committee" at their head. There were some 30 Party groups in units on the Western Front. There were many protest demonstrations among the armed forces in 1915 and 1916, both against bad conditions and in solidarity with the workers on strike. Here again the movement went far beyond the limits of direct contact with Bolshevik organisations—as when numerous units refused to go into battle, or when thousands of soldiers revolted at their depots (Kremenchug, Zhmerinka, Gomel and elsewhere).

To complete the picture: neither to "Bolshevik plotting" (apart from one Bolshevik in one area) nor to "German gold" could be attributed the giant national rising of the peoples of Central Asia in the second half of 1916—against the attempt of the Tsarist Government to "requisition" 400,000 Kazakhs and 200,000 Uzbeks between 18 and 43 for labour service with the army. The struggle lasted for four months, involving tens of thousands of armed peasants.

Such was the picture of the Russian people "heart and soul for the war", and of the "collision between the Government and the Duma", on the eve of the events which led to the overthrow of Tsardom.

---

[15] Paléologue, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 74.

(The second part of this article, under the title of "The March Revolution", will be published in the July issue of Marxism Today.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More Light on Tressell

The Story of a Search

F. C. Ball

(*We print below an excerpt from a new book by F. C. Ball on Robert Tressell, author of* "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists". *It follows up the author's earlier book* "Tressell of Mugsborough".)

IN *Tressell of Mugsborough* I was obliged to leave Robert Tressell's identity something of a mystery because I had been unable to establish any solid documentary links with a family background or with his life prior to his settling in Hastings in 1901/2.

The pen-name "Tressell" was an adaptation from the painters' trestles upon which he spent so much time and could so often be seen painting a shop-front or writing a facia but his friends and employers knew him as Robert Noonan, and this name was given on his death certificate in 1911. He was believed to be Irish or Anglo-Irish and said he came from South Africa just after the Boer War. He had brought with him his daughter Kathleen, a child of ten years, but no Mrs. Noonan, and his friends here assumed that she was dead. A friend in South Africa, however, said that he gathered from Robert's conversation that he had been unhappily married and was separated from his wife. If so this was before Kathleen was five years old (at the time this SA friend became acquainted with Robert) and it seems strange that Robert should have custody of the child, that Kathleen should never refer to her mother among friends here, and that the mother herself seems to have vanished without making any effort afterwards to get in touch with her daughter or to enquire after her welfare, that is, as far as was known.

To their friends in Hastings they were simply Robert and Kathleen Noonan although there was, to some of those closest to them, something of a mystery about this lonely father and daughter who had suddenly come to the town, and there seemed to be no over-riding reason why it should have been Hastings. Here the two lived for eight years by themselves in a succession of top-floor flats, the father suffering from tuberculosis and morbidly fearful for his young daughter's future, and in these Robert wrote the 1674 handwritten quarto pages of his book at a table made of orange-boxes while his daughter copied many of them out in her schoolgirl hand. And people wondered about them.

"Tressell's" Origins

I was given three distinct accounts of Robert's supposed origins. The first was from a workmate, one Mr. Ward, who told me that Robert had mentioned how he had recently visited his birthplace in Cleveland Street, off the Tottenham Court Road where he had been born in 1870.

The second account came from the South African friend Mr. Ogilvy of Johannesburg, who says that he worked with Robert whose full name he believed was Robert P. Noonan with a daughter Noreen or Norah. Robert had told Ogilvy that he came from Liverpool and was the son of an inspector in the Royal Irish Constabulary, but to deal with this account first, I could find no records of a Noonan as an inspector in the RIC for the years 1865-1875, and Robert's remark may have meant no more than that he sailed from Liverpool. Yet Ogilvy's statement had an air about it of recollected fact and seems hardly the kind of tale one would bother to invent.

Cleveland Street lies partly in the borough of St. Pancras and partly in the borough of St. Marylebone, I eventually discovered. I didn't know what number I wanted and no one could tell me, so I relied upon a birth certificate, but as I couldn't supply his parents' names I couldn't get one.

It then occurred to me that if Robert was Irish, perhaps he had been a Roman Catholic so I hunted, by letter, the Roman churches in the area and eventually, from the Church of St. James', Spanish Place, I obtained a copy of a certificate of baptism. This recorded the baptism of one, Robert Noonan, born December 5th, 1868, baptised January 12th, 1869, son of Timothy Noonan and Helen (née Antle). Godparents, James Ford (per proxy David Roache) and Honora Ford: baptised by the Reverend Walter Raleigh.

There was no address of the parents—no particulars whatever to give a clue about the father's occupation and Robert's birthplace. I worked out quite a picture of the London Irish of the 1860s as Robert's forebears, and after the fashion of some

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economical thinkers I deduced much of Robert's later character from it.

I made inquiries about schooling, but with no results. I tried to trace Timothy, I even wrote to the Noonans listed in the London telephone directory—all without result. At any rate I had got as far as a baptismal certificate. I was on the right lines.

For some years during my research I had been trying to find a sister of Robert's whose married name no one remembered and who, if alive, hadn't replied to my advertisements and who had been the reason why Robert had brought his daughter to Hastings—a standby in case of emergency.

Unknown to me this sister had been dead for many years but by an indirect route I eventually reached another relation, a single elderly lady, who, however, was extremely reluctant to talk about her family, but who wanted to scotch the idea that Robert was of humble origin. This is the account I wrote of my interviews with her with some of my comments.

A New Version

She stated that although she didn't know for certain, she was emphatic in her belief that he was born in Dublin! He was neither a London labourer's son nor an Irish policeman's. His father, she said, was an independent Irish gentleman of Dublin. He might have been at one time an officer of high rank in the British Army, but he had studied law and could read in the original Greek Testament. She believed that he was never called to the Bar, but went into the army instead. He was a Protestant, and Mrs. Noonan was a Catholic, a fact of great consequence to Robert. The Noonan family consisted of three or four boys, of whom Robert was the youngest, and three or four girls. Robert's early childhood was very happy and he was a very impressionable and sensitive child. His relation emphasised his affection for his father. The older sons and daughters were being educated in accordance with the status of their parents and Robert began his school life at a good school.

Somewhere about his sixth year a tragedy occurred which smashed the Noonan family. Samuel Noonan died. Robert, despite his tender age, grieved deeply for his father, and never forgot him and he was to experience the effects of the tragedy more drastically than his brothers and sisters. Before the children had recovered from this a second blow fell. After a shorter widowhood than was then considered seemly, Mrs. Noonan married again.

The stepfather didn't take kindly to the children nor they to him, and before long he and his wife were squandering the family resources. The infatuation of the mother seems to have overcome her sense of duty to her children and the mortal damage she was doing to the family structure—and to their affection for her. The time came when the older members began to leave home in disgust and presently only Robert remained.

He had developed a deep antipathy to his stepfather and there was a gradual revulsion in his feelings for his mother. When he was in his early teens the crisis came. The financial position no longer permitted of his education in the family style and he had to leave school. The next few years in his life are blank to us, but he finally left home during this period.

Becomes a Working Man?

Robert's brothers and sisters had managed to complete their education and were able to enter professions, but his was interrupted at a vital stage. And when he left home he left virtually on the level of a working man. He never made up the loss in his academic training, and he is said to have complained in later life of his poor education by comparison with that received by his brothers and sisters. He seems to have shortly come over to England, which indicates that his parents arranged his leaving home. Some of his sisters and probably his brothers had left Ireland for England, but we don't know whether Robert found a home with any of them. We don't know where he went or how he lived. He was launched into the world a callow, half-educated youth, suddenly finding between himself and the future nothing but his own brains and energy. He had neither profession nor trade. But he did have the severe handicaps which his upbringing, by its nature, would impose upon him in these changed circumstances, handicaps severest in their psychological effects.

He was now a working man without being nurtured as one.

Version Corroborated?

A few items might appear to corroborate this version.

Robert sometimes complained to friends of his poor schooling; he once made a wisecrack that his ill health was due to the age of his parents—he being the youngest of many—and he said he had never been apprenticed to a trade—a most unlikely omission if he had been born into a working-class family of any standing. And there is no doubt that his relative (and she didn't deny being one) came from a cultivated family, yet she could give no names or other verifiable family data beyond Dublin as birthplace, Samuel as his father's name and Adelaide and Alice as two of his sisters.

And there is no record of a Samuel Noonan in War Office lists for the years 1865-75 or in Navy lists which I tried for good measure. Without the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mother's maiden name and address no research could be undertaken by Dublin Registrar to trace the family. And as a result of every effort the case stood as before—all I knew for certain was that a man calling himself Robert Noonan had lived in Hastings from 1902 till 1910 during which time he had written *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* under the name Tressell. This much I could be fairly certain of because through Kathleen, after her father's death and the publication of his book in 1914, friends became aware that their friend and the author were one and the same person.

A Name Kept Dark

At the risk of appearing to dramatise unduly, I must add what I didn't know until after their deaths and the publication of my book that the two most important people in the whole business withheld through all negotiation and enquiry the most important piece of information—the real name of the family.

I don't really know why they should do so and in the case of one, the aforementioned relation, one might understand, perhaps, her attempt to correct the belief that Robert was of working-class origin without giving away family secrets.

In the case of the other I can offer no explanation.

I have an account in my book of my search for and purchase of the original Tressell manuscript, a quest which took some years, but I did not say in the book that since the beginning I had been asking Mr. Grant Richards, publisher in 1914 of the abridged first edition of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* for the whereabouts of the manuscript and for any information he might have about Tressell. For several years we corresponded intermittantly without Mr. Richards, who sounded extremely friendly, telling me anything about the manuscript or about Tressell, until finally he began to sound me as to my financial standing (which was low) and this was followed by another very long interval until finally he evidently decided, or persuaded the owner to decide, that the manuscript wouldn't fetch more at that time than I had offered some years before.

I even had a friendly interview with Mr. Richards during this period yet, like Tressell's relation, he never once hinted that I was looking for the wrong name in all my searching, a name which both knew. When I discovered this I at first put his reticence down to a desire to spare the feelings of the relation (if he knew of her existence or there was some agreement not to divulge) but in the light of subsequent events I decided this wasn't so. It was something I just couldn't explain.

It was in 1956, about thirteen years after I first wrote to Mr. Richards, five years after the publication of my own book, and following upon the expiry of the period of copyright, which allowed the publication of Tressell's original manuscript unabridged, that I received copies of letters written by Miss Jessie Pope, the original editor of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, to Grant Richards, letters that I didn't know existed, which were to throw an unexpected light on Robert Tressell's background. You may guess my amazement when I learned that Miss Pope addressed Kathleen Noonan as "Miss Croker".

Aristocratic Ancestors?

A letter from Miss Pope to Richards, dated November, 3rd, 1913, began:

> "You will remember I raised the question when I saw you as to there being any doubt whether the writer really was a house painter, and from what his daughter had told you, you were quite satisfied about the matter. However, to make quite sure, I sent her a message and she came round to see me yesterday, and after requesting a private interview, began, 'I think, Miss Pope, I had better tell you all about it.—My great-grandfather was Sir Samuel Croker'. I told her it didn't matter what her great-grandfather was, so long as her father earned his living as a house painter, and had really lived among the scenes he described, and suffered the privations of an 'out of work'. After a good deal of beating about the bush she admitted, that from the age of sixteen to forty-three, when he died, he had earned his living in that way, only she was anxious to put it at sign-writing and graining, as well as house painting. Whether or no there is much foundation to the claims of a knight in the family a few generations back—I don't know—I am inclined to think, that being of rather a romantic turn of mind, the girl was anxious to impress me—though she afterwards remarked she wished to make no claim to the relationship, when I suggested that some of her relations—the Crokers—would probably acknowledge her."

On the Track

Sir Samuel Croker! My first thought was that it would be simple to establish the background and family record of a titled man, and my second that my famous working-class writer was after all the son of a gentleman. No offence, gentlemen. Well, I had been told that his father's name was Samuel, that he was an Irish gentleman, that there had been a break-up in the family. And now Kathleen talks about her *great*-grandfather. I thought it curious that no one associated with the first production of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* should have taken Kathleen's story seriously because verification would be easy if Kathleen allowed it. That's what *I* thought. Perhaps the people concerned knew better.

The first step was to consult the register at Somerset House for birth and death certificates for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert and his father, but nothing could be found. Then one day, after having made some enquiries in Dublin by post, I received a birth certificate from there informing me that one Robert Croker, son of Samuel Croker, Pensioner, and Mary Croker, née Noonan, was born on April 18th, 1870, at 37 Wexford Street, No. 3 South City District, Dublin, Ireland.

My wife and I left for Dublin assisted by Messrs. Lawrence & Wishart. Having a birth certificate of Robert, we first put in hand research into his family background at the Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle, where we felt confident we should indeed find them all safely enshrined among the Landed Gentry, or even among the Aristocracy.

A brief examination of both records failed, however, to disclose any such titled Croker. So I paid three pounds as a first instalment for further search and went on to the Customs House, where are kept the registers of births, deaths and marriages.

At the Customs House we checked the birth certificates for Robert and searched for those of his two reputed sisters, Alice and Adelaide. And sure enough, although we could find nothing about an Alice Croker, we came upon an entry for Adelaide Anne Croker, born March 20th, 1867, at 53 Lower Wellington Street, Dublin North, father, Samuel Croker, military pensioner, mother, Mary Croker.

We had, I felt, at last identified the author of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.

Other Threads

We would now take up some of the other threads. Robert had left home, his relation said, because upon the death of his father, his mother re-married and squandered the family fortune. When had his father died? And who and what was he? There were a number of possibilities for finding answers to those questions. We could look up the entry of his father's death, and follow up any details given, although the term "pensioner" hadn't been precise, but with the discovery "Military Pension", the search narrowed considerably. Then, of course, if he were a man of standing, there might be an obituary in some of the newspapers of the time, and we could search Army Pensions Lists and discover his rank, regiment, service, etc. His relation had said she believed he was an officer of rank in the army. Of course there was also his education, for he could speak and write in Greek. We could soon find out where a gentleman of such standing had been educated.

Our first disappointment came when we failed to discover any record of Samuel's death, and a still greater, when it was confirmed for us that there had been no such person as Sir Samuel Croker, neither was there a Lord Croker.

But there was a Lady Croker, and this mystified us for a while because, we argued, where there was a "Lady", there must be a "Sir" or a "Lord", and surely this Lady Croker must be something to do with the title mentioned by Kathleen! But no, Lady Croker was the wife of plain Edward Croker, with her title inherited as the daughter of her father, and her husband, Edward, was apparently no relation at all to our Samuel Croker.

Searching for Samuel

So we left this and concentrated on the search to identify Robert's father, Samuel, and this was a far more complicated business than we had supposed it could be. Where would one find out about a man, when neither the Registers at Customs House, Dublin, nor those at Somerset House, London, mentioned his name?

We turned to Thom's Directories for 1870, to have a look for 37 Wexford Street, where Robert was born.

To add to the confusion, we discovered that in 1870, 37 Wexford Street was tenanted by a Dr. Daly, and that there was no mention of the Crokers, so we looked up the names-index under "Croker" and there discovered that in 1870, a Samuel Croker, the only one shown, was living at No. 1 Winslow Terrace, Rathgar, Dublin—and was described as Samuel Croker, RM.

Whether this was our Samuel Croker or not we didn't know, we could only ask ourselves why, if he were, his son Robert should be born at Wexford Street! Of course, it was possible that Dr. Daly had some kind of nursing home there, and that Mrs. Croker had gone in as a patient for the birth. There was no means of knowing. We did, however, go along to 37 Wexford Street, took a photograph and made enquiries at one or two shops as to the history of the place and were informed that in 1870, No. 37 was most probably some kind of lodging or boarding house. This of course, made matters worse. Why was the doctor's name given as tenant, and why was Mrs. Croker having her son at a lodging house? The answer was probably that Dr. Daly ran a nursing home.

There for a moment we were stuck, so we went back to the job of finding Samuel Croker. If, we argued, Robert's family had any social standing, then they would be noted in the directory as householders, unlike the thousands of labourers and other workers who lived in tenements. In that case, the only Samuel Croker shown in the directory must be Robert's father. So now we had the job of identifying this Samuel Croker as the Samuel Croker of the birth certificate, and to help us we had only the old clues of "Pensioner", "Military Pensioner", and the new clue shown in the Directory, "Samuel Croker, RM". To us, "RM" immediately suggested "Royal Marines", and naturally we at once saw the significance of "Military Pensioner",

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and what was more, of the remark by Robert's relative that she believed Samuel to have been a "high-ranking" officer in the British Army.

Resident Magistrate

In Thom's Directories there are given lists of Appointments and Servicing Officers, of MPs, of officers of government departments, etc., and we began with a diligent search from 1870 backwards, sure that Samuel had been a member of the Garrison Forces in Ireland, had married an Irishwoman, and upon retirement had settled down in Dublin, where his name first appears in Thom's Directory in 1862. But no Samuel was to be found, although there was a Surgeon-Major, Arthur Croker. Then someone told us that RM could also mean, and in fact most probably meant "Resident Magistrate"; and as Thom's Directories also contained lists of Resident Magistrates we were soon on the track, and sure enough there was our Samuel Croker, RM, featured year by year right back to December 24th, 1838, when he was appointed. And a footnote revealed that he had been appointed from the position of Inspector, Royal Irish Constabulary.

It had been said that Samuel had died during Robert's childhood, and that his mother had remarried, so we began again. Samuel seemed to have had a number of changes of address in Dublin since 1862, previously to which his duties had taken him to many districts of Ireland, but in 1874 he disappeared from the Directory and a Mrs. I. Croker took his place at No. 1 Winslow Terrace, Rathgar. We concluded that Samuel died in 1873/4 and that his widow was left, but the initial "I" worried us.

His wife's name was given as Mary Croker on Robert's birth certificate and when we checked the registers for Samuel's death we could find no record of it either in 1874 or in any other year, and here I might add that neither could we later find it recorded at Somerset House. And to make it more baffling we could find no entry of the re-marriage of Mary Croker, if indeed she had re-married, neither could we find the entry for her death.

The Crokers seemed to have vanished after 1870, so far as the Registers were concerned. There were, of course, other avenues. Samuel must surely have left a will. But again there was no record of it at the Public Records Office, Dublin, and here again, I may add, neither did we find any at Somerset House. This meant of course, that we were without the corroborative evidence of any mention of Robert in such a will, and of leads which that might have given us; and in addition, we still had no line at all on the "Sir" Samuel Croker, reputed great grand-father of Kathleen, and presumably father of Samuel, her grand-father. Neither had we obtained any information about Robert's alleged sister, Alice.

Having come to what was virtually a full stop in our efforts to identify Samuel and so trace back the immediate sources of Robert's family, we decided while still in Dublin, to make a search of schools and find something about his school life but we discovered that our visit coincided with the schools' summer holidays, and although we visited a number of schools, we found them closed!

New Evidence

We returned to England leaving £3 at the Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle, for a six-hour search period, and after reaching home we waited expectantly for a couple of weeks for the report. Eventually it arrived, consisting of a single document given in full.

CROKER

The preliminary genealogical investigation which has been carried out has not revealed any conclusive evidence of the identity or parentage of Robert Noonan (or Croker) but details in two deeds would appear to merit careful consideration. By a conveyance, dated August 11th, 1873, Samuel Croker, of 1 Winslow Terrace, Rathgar, demised to Mary Anne Noonan, of 38 Besborough Avenue, North Strand, Dublin, spinster, a house at No. 145 Great Britain Street, in the tenancy of Robert Johnston at an annual fee farm rent of £27 13s. 10¼d. (reg. August 16th, 1873. 1873. 30. 78). On August 17th, 1874, a memorial of a Family Settlement, dated June 2nd, 1874, was registered. The parties to this settlement were:

Samuel Croker, retired Resident Magistrate, of London.

Jane Usher Croker, 1 Winslow Terrace, Rathgar, Dublin, his wife.

Annie Croker, 1 Winslow Terrace, his daughter.

Surgeon-Major Arthur Croker, of Queenstown, Co. Cork, his eldest son.

John Croker, 74 Berkley Street, Liverpool, his second son.

Samuel Croker, of Parsontown, King's Co., his third son.

Melian Jane Millington, wife of Richard Millington, 109 Belgrave Road, Birmingham, his daughter.

This deed is an assignment in trust and confirmation of Deeds of Annuity and Conveyance and relates to Irvine Castle, premises at Great Britain Street and Winslow Terrace, household furniture and effects and pensions of £400 and £36 10s.

It also records that Samuel Croker "granted one Mary Noonan an annuity of £100 payable out of his pension". (1874. 33. 90.) Neither deed contains any reference to a relationship between Samuel Croker and Mary Noonan but it is clear that Samuel Croker, the Resident Magistrate, was providing for a Mary Noonan in the first place by a grant of a house yielding a yearly rent and in the second place by an annuity of £100. It must also

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be noted that this latter provision is included in a settlement made on his immediate family. The coincidence of the name, the existence of this financial provision and the record of Samuel Croker's wife's name as Jane suggests that Robert and Adelaide may have been the illegitimate children of Samuel Croker, R.M., and Mary Noonan. In connection with the information supplied by the birth certificates of the two children it may be borne in mind that those records are compiled from details supplied by the Informant.

It is possible that some further investigations would prove or disprove this hypothesis. It is noted that in 1874 Samuel Croker was residing in London and it is possible that a grant of probate of his will was issued in England. If the will were traced at Somerset House, it might be found to contain helpful information. It is presumed that all details relating to Samuel Croker have been extracted from the R.I.C. records at the Public Record Office, London. It might also be advisable to have searches made in the Records of the parish which included Lwr. Wellington Quay in 1867, and Wexford Street, in 1870, for entries of the baptism of Adelaide and Robert Noonan (or Croker).

If it is established that Samuel Croker, R.M., was the father of Robert Noonan (Croker) it is not improbable that the immediate ancestry of Samuel Croker could be established if required. There is a certain amount of Croker material in the records of this office and whereas a brief preliminary examination did not reveal any reference to a Samuel Croker identifiable with Samuel Croker, R.M., it is possible that more detailed searches would do so. Even if Samuel Croker is not recorded, his father might be, and as Samuel Croker appears to have been a man of some substance it is probable that the name of his father would be ascertained from sources such as the Registry of Deeds.

It is trusted that the foregoing observations will be of some assistance, and it is regretted that the investigation has not, so far, yielded any conclusive information.

Search Ended

Whether or not this document confirmed, in spite of its expressed doubts, the parentage of Robert Tressell, I was myself in some doubt about, at first; but in face of the fact that no other Robert Croker with parents Samuel Croker and Mary Noonan are shown in the registers, I now take it as proof, despite the fact that Mary Noonan, on Robert's birth certificate, declares herself as Mrs. Mary Croker. As the document states, it must be borne in mind that the information on the birth certificate was supplied by the Mother, and there she describes herself as Mary Croker, formerly Mary Noonan.

Robert was baptised at St. Kevin's Harrington Street, and the entry in the Baptism Register reads:

Parents:	Samuel Croker.
	Maria Noon, 37 Wexford Street.
Sponsors:	Michael Noon.
	Maria Hannah Croker.
Comments:	"Pater a Catholicus".
Baptised:	April 26th, 1870.
Priest:	Jacobus Baxter.

A number of questions are raised by this entry.

Allowing for the lamentable practice of Romanising names, the mother's name is given as Maria Noon, and the sponsors as Michael Noon and Maria Hannah Croker. First there is the confusion in the rendering of the mother's name as Noon and the fact that a Michael Noon, presumably a relation, is sponsor. It would appear that the mother was perhaps a Mary Noon. She might have changed her name, of course, yet on the birth certificate she is shown as Mary Croker, née Noonan.

Then there is Maria Hannah Croker, a person whose name doesn't appear on any other documents I have unearthed, perhaps a sister of Samuel. The address, 37 Wexford Street, corresponds with that shown on the Birth Certificate and undoubtedly this is the Robert Croker whose birth is recorded there. In the Conveyance of 1873 quoted in the Genealogical Office report, however, there is mention of Mary Anne Noonan, whereas in both the Birth Certificate and the Baptism Certificate, Robert's mother gives her name as Mary Noonan only.

Nevertheless there is surely very strong reason for assuming that the Samuel Croker and Mary Anne Noonan of the Conveyance are the Samuel Croker and Mary Noonan of the Birth and Baptism Certificates, in which case, the suggestion made in the document from the Genealogical Office that Robert and Adelaide may have been the illegitimate children of Samuel and Mary would appear to be the only conclusion to draw.

In attempts to confirm this, further research into the identity of Samuel, his professional life and social background, resulted only in the single reference in the Registry of Deeds under Index of Grantors 1828-1849, Samuel Croker, and under Index of Lands County Galway 1845-1875 under Inverine; Inverine Castle, mortgaged to Samuel Croker, November 21st, 1862.

And for the present this is as much as I've collected about Tressell's origins and it will be evident that there are many discrepancies besides those I have discussed.

I have discontinued research but I've no doubt that in time someone or better still some institution or foundation will take it up again and I believe will confirm my opinion that I did in fact find Robert Tressell in Robert Croker, another name in that extraordinary line of Anglo-Irish writers. *(Copyright © F. C. Ball, 1967.)*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Discussion Contributions on:

Finance Capital

Ron Bellamy

MAY I comment upon some questions raised by T. L. Drinkwater (arising from my review article of the Baran/Sweezy book—*Monopoly Capital*—in *Marxism Today* of November 1966) about finance capital, which were also urged by Maurice Dobb in the March issue as "both pertinent and timely".

"Why should 'finance capital'," writes Dobb, "as the 'merging or concrescence of banks with industry' necessarily be interpreted as the invariable dominance of the former over the latter? To confine Lenin's notion to this one way dominance has always struck me as an oversimplified interpretation."

These questions may be both pertinent and timely, but not to anything that I wrote. It is not clear to me who (in the context of the present discussion) is supposed to have advanced this "oversimplified interpretation". I have the impression of having advanced exactly the opposite: "the concept of finance capital (itself sometimes vulgarised into 'the dominance of the banks over industry'—which is *not* the Leninist concept) . . .". (My article, p. 335.) One could hardly be more explicit.

Before coming to what both Dobb and Drinkwater are mainly concerned about, namely a form of finance capital in which they believe the "banks" (interpreted to mean all types of financial intermediary) play a minimal role, I think there is something to be added on the question of dominance. Dobb certainly believes that the dominance of the financial motive (the kind of motivation possessed par excellence by the "banks") is the essence of Lenin's notion. Lenin, though not on balance taking up a one-sided position on the dominance of the banks, certainly cited many instances in which the emphasis was in that direction (for instance the passage from Hilferding quoted at the beginning of Ch. III of *Imperialism*, the Chapter on Finance Capital and the Finance Oligarchy). Should we not expect all relationships between owners of capital to be ones of antagonistic partnership, involving the attempted domination of one capital by another? Naturally this does not imply that the bankers (even in the classic German type of finance capital) are always dominant, not does it imply that any partner, once dominant, should remain so. On these questions I suspect that there is little or no disagreement.

The Baran/Sweezy "Giant Corporation" and the Holding Company

What I criticised in the review of Baran/Sweezy was their picture of the "giant corporation" as one which had historically been dominated by the banks (specifically in the United States by the investment banker) but which had, by a process of internal financing (and presumably buying back its own securities from the bankers—though this process is never analysed theoretically or historically) achieved independence of the banks. I disputed as a question of *fact* (and produced a large volume of evidence to which neither of the comments has referred at all) whether this picture was true and asked how the severance was supposed to have taken place and what residual part the banks are supposed to play now in the US economy. In making these criticisms I may have gone a little beyond the actual work under review, but not unfairly so since it seemed to me that it developed views expressed by Sweezy in an earlier work. On p. 267 of his *Theory of Capitalist Development* (1942) he had argued:

> "the process of combination cannot continue indefinitely. . . . Once the spectre of cut-throat competition has been banished and a modus vivendi for the most general and necessary monopoly ends has been discovered, further combinations occur less frequently and may soon cease altogether" . . . "the dominance of finance capital is a passing phase of capitalist development which coincides roughly with the transition from competitive to monopoly capital".

I think we need to be clear that in the Baran/Sweezy view either finance capital does not exist at all today or, if it does, its *typical* form (perhaps even its universal form, since borrowing from the banks is in their view a *policy* which the giant corporation can take or leave, and not a necessity) is the giant self-financing corporation. The examples given of this organism suggest that they are thinking of "industrial" companies such as US Steel or General Motors or others contained in the official and semi-official lists of the largest *non-financial* companies.

The core of the Dobb-Drinkwater question is rather different from this, but it has one important point in common. If all that is being asked is: "Can an industrial company (in Dobb's case rather more precisely—a holding company) which finances its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own development and its acquisitions of other companies entirely from its own profits be an example of finance capital?", surely the answer is yes. If I may be permitted to quote from a draft chapter of the book in preparation to which Tom Drinkwater referred, I developed this point as follows:

> "The distinction between a 'banking' (in our broader sense) and an 'industrial' enterprise begins to break down at the border lines as soon as large amalgamations of enterprises appear. Hence the holding company, and many forms of enterprise approximating to it (e.g. the very prevalent contemporary 'group of companies', which may not have the formal machinery of a holding company) are forms of finance capital.
>
> "The reason why such an initially—or primarily—industrial enterprise may acquire the features of a bank is not difficult to see. It is able to collect the working balances (money, money capital) and depreciation funds of the members of the group and wield them as a single mass of money capital; further it can dispose of particular companies, thus obtaining further masses of money capital, without impairing the integrity of the group. This is possible because the relations between the constituent parts of the group are not necessarily of a *technical* nature.
>
> "This point needs to be made because the reader might otherwise rightly wonder in what respect a holding company's powers to do the above differ from those of any company, e.g. a *single* company engaged in production. The difference surely is this: that the constituent parts of a single productive company form, at any rate in principle, a *technically integral* whole, from which no part can be lopped off without destroying—or at least seriously impairing—the viability of the whole. Transitional stages between the single productive company and the holding company obviously begin to appear in embryo form in proportion as single productive companies become multi-product, and further still as the products emerging from multi-product firms become independent of each other as to process or material used, or as to markets of sale. But the process of a company's becoming multi-product is not necessarily (nor, historically speaking, mainly) via diversification within the single firm. It is rather via the acquisition of other firms.
>
> "The reasons for this are simple—that it is easier to take over a going concern which already has capital in a specific form, combined with skilled labour and operating experience, and possessed of an established market position. Of course, this path is not universal either. Where the multiplicity of products has emerged from acquisition of existing firms, each of the *production* activities may well be carried on by a separate 'division' of the 'group'. But the one activity which is invariably centralised is the management of liquid reserves of money capital, or surpluses over prime costs, acquired by each of its divisions. At the back of this centralisation of money capital under a single control lies the double aim of minimising idle reserves for the group as a whole, and maximising the size of capital which can be effectively concentrated as a *masse de manoeuvre* on a single front of activity. In this respect a holding company is a banker for the group, and not a passive deposit banker, but rather an investment banker of the German type."

Again, there is agreement—so far. But whether finance capital consists exclusively, or even mainly, of such holding companies either here or in the USA (it certainly does not in West Germany), and whether *all* holding companies are examples of finance capital, are two questions of importance to which I would like to turn next, since the Dobb-Drinkwater argument does not resolve them.

Are all Self-Financing Holding Companies Examples of Finance Capital?

It will be easier to answer this question if we ask a prior one: "In what way does finance capital differ from monopoly capital in general?"

I take it that finance capital is a further stage in the development of monopoly capital. It arises out of monopoly capital and contributes towards its further development. Dobb suggests that the essence of finance capital is to be found in a change of motivation—"the increasing dominance of financial influences and motivations over industry", and he contrasts "concern with the manipulation of share values" to "concern over production".

It will not, I think, be disputed that changes in the aims of capitalism at different stages of its development arise out of changes in production relations. Let us contrast the aims at three different stages, viz., the stages of competitive capitalism, monopoly capitalism, and finance capitalism, using Marx's well-known formula for the circulation of capital in order to delineate the changes of aim. The feature the three stages have in common is the self expression of money capital (M—M′), with the aim of maximising M′/M.[1]

(i) *Competitive Capitalism:* Circulation M—C . . . P . . . C′—M′. Under competitive conditions the intensity of labour employed by all capitalists is equalised via the mobility of labour. The prices of all commodities (including labour power) entering into C, and the prices of all commodities C′ being converted on the market into M′, are competitive prices, the same for all capitalists. Under such conditions there is one way, *and one way only*, to make abnormal profits, and that is by superior productive efficiency, greater than the average, in the conversion

[1] Given the initial M, the maximisation of M′/M is, of course, identical with the more familiar maximisation of M′ minus M

M

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of C into C′.[2] That is why Marx regarded the aim of profit maximisation under competitive capitalist conditions as the engine of technical progress.

(ii) *Monopoly capitalism:* Circulation is the same, *but* because of the possibility of controlling relations between the capitalists there emerges the possibility of controlling the prices of commodities involved in the transformation of M into C (buying cheap, i.e., below cost of production plus average profit) and, perhaps more important, controlling the prices involved in the transformation of C′ into M′ (selling dear). Hence a new factor—buying cheap and selling dear—enters into profit maximisation.[3] This means that energy and resources may be more fruitfully (from the standpoint of the individual monopolist) put into building up and maintaining market positions of privilege rather than into technical progress. Hence the mechanism for technical progress is weakened.

(iii) *Finance capitalism:* The typical circulation of banking capital is simply M—M′. It is not the concern of the banker where or how the borrower of M obtained the necessary expansion of his capital in order to repay M′. The banker therefore becomes the apotheosis of the self-expansion of capital by *any* means. In the circulation of banking capital the process of production *need* not appear at all. Well might Lenin write: "Capitalism, which began its development with petty usury, ends its development with gigantic usury capital." To be sure, the only *ultimate* source of the current self-expansion of capital is the surpluses arising from various types of exploitation. But the *distribution* of both the currently produced surpluses and the accumulations arising from past surpluses is a question of power—the power given by positions of market privilege. Hence the construction of privileged positions in all markets (including the market for money capital itself) and in all political institutions which can affect the distribution of the net proceeds from those markets, becomes the main avenue to the self-expansion of capital.

[2] C′/C in any one firm compared with another is a measure of their relative efficiencies in converting social resources into output.

[3] For those who like things in formal terms, this can be shown as follows. M′/M can be written identically as:

$$\frac{M'}{C'} \times \frac{C'}{C} \times \frac{C}{M}.$$

Buying cheap increases C/M; selling dear increases M′/C′ (indeed M′/C′ becomes the ratio expressing the monopoly power of the seller to raise market prices above prices of production).

Thus M′/M becomes less dependent upon the size of C′/C. Hence innovation and superior productive efficiency become less decisive in the maximisation of profits than they were under competitive capitalism.

It will be seen from the above analysis that, once again, there is no essential difference with Dobb's specification of the crucial characteristics of finance capital. But I am not at all convinced that on this criterion the holding company, irrespective of the internal relation between its constituent parts, is necessarily an example of finance capital.

For if we take a typical holding company—British Motor Corporation (Holdings) Ltd., or ICI (since Drinkwater introduced it), or General Motors—in all these cases the primary relationship between the parts appears to be integration either for technical reasons or integration to guarantee monopoly sources of supply or markets. It is because giant corporations such as these have internal relationships of the former kind (technical integration) that managers and economists from socialist countries have found it profitable to study the problems they have in common with the Soviet trusts or the GDR's VVBs.

It may be countered that my examples are not typical, and that a great deal has been written of recent years about diversification of large companies into technically unrelated activities. I would not deny that such cases exist, but when one looks more closely, it usually turns out that the links are not of a purely financial character, but that some kind of rationalisation on a technical basis is in process, or that a firm is engaged in shifting the focus of its productive activities from dying to growing industries. I would not for a moment doubt the importance of the gains being made in the merger movement of the last decade from company reconstruction and rationalisation, but would add (a) that the banks have played a very significant part in this movement, and it certainly has not depended mainly upon internal accumulation, and (b) no one could seriously doubt that these changes in production relations between the capitalists have been considerably activated by the needs and requirements of the scientific-technical revolution (e.g. the forward movement of ICI into textiles and clothing has been prompted by the very great rigidities involved in large-scale artificial fibre production and the need for stable guaranteed markets).

Can (or do) Industrial Companies or Holding Companies Survive Without the Banks?

I am posing this as a theoretical question and as one of fact. It is necessary to do both because the facts over a short period can mislead one into mistaking features which have temporary causes for features which are casual determinants of a new longer term trend. The only protection one has against this is to consider whether there are reasons to expect a relationship to develop between banks and industry which is of a *necessary* character, that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is, one which arises out of the nature of banks and industry when monopoly has developed in both. In the draft of my book mentioned earlier I have tried to examine in some detail what those necessities are for both sides of the relation.

Here, for the sake of brevity, I will consider only the needs of industry for external capital.

The maximum percentage rate at which an industrial company can grow on the basis of ploughing back its own profits (internal accumulation) can easily be shown to be its percentage rate of net profit on its existing capital (net, that is, of taxation). This assumes that it pays out no profits as dividends, and actually gives it an improbably high rate of growth from this source, since any company which makes profits but pays no dividends is a certain candidate for a take-over bid. But I wish to take the case at its strongest.

There seems no reason to suppose that this rate of internal accumulation exactly coincides as to size or (just as important) as to timing, with that rate which is necessary in order to conduct a successful struggle against rivals, whether the capital be required for expensive equipment demanded by new technology, or for the acquisition of rivals through merger or take-over. A considerable part of acquisitions has in fact been paid for in cash (*Economic Trends* figures suggest that during the period 1954 to 1963 anything between one-third and one-half of all acquisitions were paid for in cash). Since T. L. Drinkwater has raised ICI as a case on the other side, may I examine precisely ICI. *The Times* of 18.2.66 commented on the ICI annual report for that year, after noting that pre-tax profits had fallen, as follows:

> "All this is depressing but it is not getting the board down. Look at the capital spending figures. In 1964 ICI spent £88 million on capital projects. In 1965 the total was £125 million. And this year it will be £10-20 million higher still. Cash flow will be around the £100 million mark in 1966, so the *recent £50 million loan issue will not solve the group's financial worries for very long*" (emphasis added, RB).

In the report for 1967 (*Sunday Times*, 2.4.67) it is noted that for the current year an increasing proportion of the finance required will be found from depreciation provisions, and:

> "there will not be any need for further (external, RB) finance this year. . . . Our capital expenditure is falling very rapidly and . . . trimmed in light of current economic conditions . . .
>
> "For many years the chemical industry was growing very rapidly and there was every reason to believe that this growth would continue. Very large investment in new plant was needed. When, as in the past two or three years, there was superimposed upon normal growth the consequences of rapid technological progress which required the earlier replacement of older plants by newer plants with lower operating costs, the industry's resources both in terms of finance and personnel were inevitably strained. Moreover, the chemical industry was capital intensive . . . and it could only offset the increases in wages and other costs (which were inevitable with inflation) and meet foreign competition by constructing large plants to gain advantages of scale as well as adopting new and cheap processes as these were discovered."

In short, when capital investment was low (1967), internal accumulation was adequate to finance it: when it was high (1964-66), external resources were required. This latter position, in my opinion, represents the normal necessities of monopoly capitalist struggle, except in such temporary periods as the first post-war years when firms had the residue of unspent war-time accumulations plus EPT refunds and War Damage Payments.

As an aside, I might add that though, as Drinkwater notes, Aaronovitch gives ICI as one of his groups of finance capital, he also lists (see *Ruling Class*, p. 106) four banking organisations as the four biggest shareholdings in order of size—Baring Nominees, Pension Fund Securities of ICI, Midland Group, and National Provincial Group. Dobb instances the famous pyramided holding company of Insull. A recent study (*Insull*, by Forrest McDonald, University of Chicago Press, 1962) shows that in the earlier stages Insull had the closest relations with the Chicago bankers, and that when the crash came, Insull did not survive where others, with closer relations with the bigger banks of New York, did. Legislation since Insull has made holding companies such as his or that of the Van Schweringens more difficult to form and replaced them largely by closer-knit organisations of the trust or complete amalgamation type.

One form of "merging or concrescence" which has perhaps received too little attention is that of working capital. Recent studies (e.g. Dunning in Dun and Bradstreet and Moody's *Business Ratios*, November 1966) show that working capital forms a sizeable proportion of the total assets of the largest companies. Now unless there are no economies of large-scale operation in banking, one would expect the banks to be more efficient in providing the monopolies with working capital than they could be themselves. Further, an industrial monopoly which can guarantee supplies of working capital from banking sources frees its own resources for longer term investment.

There is one final point here, of a theoretical kind. I can conceive an industrial holding company large enough to be *able* to provide all its own capital funds, both fixed and circulating. But it seems to violate the principles of the division of labour to suppose that it can do all these things *better* than the specialised institutions which have emerged precisely to perform

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

such functions. How big would ICI have to become in order to provide internally all the skills and organisation for becoming a financial intermediary? It has become a commonplace that one of the reasons for acquiring existing companies rather than building up new activities from scratch is that existing organisations of a specialised character have advantages which it would take a new organisation time—perhaps too much time—to acquire. This principle is not confined only to relations between one industrial firm and another.

Naturally, the test of theory is practice. In the original review I gave some sources for evidence. Since then more confirmatory examples have appeared for the USA. The reconstruction of the giant Douglas Aircraft Corporation has been undertaken by a banking consortium. The Chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee in a new report (*The Times*, 30.12.66) speaks of the tremendous economic leverage possessed by the commercial banks trust departments through their varied stockholdings in excess of $215,000 million. *The Times Annual Financial and Commercial Review* (October 4th, 1965) spoke of ". . . placing in Europe dollar loans for United States companies operating abroad. In addition a block of Ford Motor (US) common shares forming part of the huge six million secondary offering made across the Atlantic was placed in this country".

Conclusion

1. Many forms of finance capital (as of monopoly capital) are possible and exist, with no doubt different forms predominating at different times and places. There are, in my opinion, considerable theoretical reasons and the strongest empirical evidence for believing that the self-financing (industrial) holding company, entirely independent of the banking system, is not a very common one.

2. The emergence of finance capital has two effects upon the ability of capitalism to develop the productive forces. *Firstly*, there is increased emphasis upon the circulation M—M′. Here I have no disagreement with Dobb, since I have merely formalised his "increasing dominance of the financial influences and motivation". But unless one considers a *second effect*, there is some danger of underestimating, or being unprepared for, the rate of technical advance which monopoly capitalism since World War II has been able to produce—to the surprise, let us admit, of many of us.

It is true, of course, that the technical (including military-technical) advance of the socialist world has introduced a new factor of growing strength into the determinants of the growth of productive forces in the capitalist world. But that can hardly be the whole story. This second effect is that finance capital facilitates the further, even more rapid growth of concentration and centralisation of capital. The growth of modern productive forces requires qualitatively new dimensions of operation not only in production but also in research and development. They require further socialisation of production. Under capitalism the only way that can happen is through the further centralisation of private ownership via monopoly, via finance capital, and increasingly via the state.

In emphasising also the second effect I am perhaps trying to counter the residual bias of anyone who first became acquainted with Marxist economics in the thirties, namely the bias which consists in believing that monopoly and finance capital result in an absolute restriction in production or at least a slowing down of the rate of growth of the productive forces *as compared with the past*. What they do slow down is the rate of growth of the productive forces *compared with what is possible*. And what is possible is being increasingly demonstrated by a different social system.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art, Science and Architecture

John Hanna

The author spent fourteen years on architecture and urban design in local government at Swansea (where he was ABT Branch Secretary) and Leeds, before entering full-time teaching. He was at Liverpool College of Building for the inception of the full-time undergraduate course in Town Planning and is now Senior Lecturer, Architect-Planner, on the equivalent course within the school of Architecture, Oxford College of Technology.

THERE can be no disagreement with W. H. Evans' conclusion that much detailed research is needed before a satisfactory answer can be found to the complex questions raised by the current situation in architecture.

The "Modern Movement"

By his references to the "Modern Movement", however, he seems to conduct discussion of the acute problems of the present in the terms and concepts of the 'thirties or the wartime hopes for their realisation in peacetime reconstruction. The "Modern Movement" is not of today and the passing of its spirit was observed, with the final disintegration of the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne), at the wake held in Dubrovnik, 1956. The extension of functionalism which W. H. Evans advocates was already evident in the work of the early forties in Brazil by Oscar Niemeyer (now no longer practising in his own country but, deprived of political rights, in exile in France where he has designed a new Communist Party headquarters for Paris). But, since the war, modern architecture has pursued diverse anti-rational trends, of which the "sculptural formalism" of Sydney Opera House is one example, and has also reverted to revivalism, of earlier formalist phases from the turn of the century, such as the "Neo-Gaudí" of the American Embassy in Dublin, or "Neo-Art Nouveau", "Neo-De Stijl", "Neo-Perret", to quote "historicisms" identified by Pevsner in a talk given at the RIBA five years ago.

The "Modern Movement" and much subsequent architectural education have been bedevilled by a self-conscious obsession with "style" and the need to create a modern style as an end in itself. The resultant style-mongering places "modern" architecture within the continuing tradition of the "Victorian" period. (An all-embracing term for the whole period, as explanatory as "Architecture of the period of Imperialism", might aid appreciation of this.) The significance of the succession of styles is largely lost on architectural students, who concentrate on the forms of style to an exclusion of the process, the dialectics, of style-creation. This would require an understanding of society, of human organisation in the extended control over our terrestrial environment, a comprehensive outlook which is not fostered by inter-professional divisions. Such an outlook was, however, present in the writings of some architects of the early Modern Movement—for example, André Lurçat who, forty years ago, recognised socialisation as a factor paralleled by developments in architecture which would result in the rôle of the architect being expanded and even completely transformed.

Unity of the Arts

The general weakness in the revolution of forms within the conditions of existing society (present not only in the Modern Movement, but also way back in the Romantic Movement) was also to be seen in Gropius' attempts to restore the unity of the arts in the modern machine age by teaching "the common citizenship of all forms of creative work and their logical interdependence upon one another" at the Bauhaus—where he also forbade political activity by staff and students alike! The reference to his book, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, should certainly be supplemented by the account, in Claude Schnaidt's recent biography, *Hannes Meyer*, of the work of this functionalist architect and Marxist who, in succeeding Gropius at the Bauhaus, attempted to repair its inadequacies and further develop its teaching at a critical stage in the history of the Modern Movement—a phase which has hitherto been virtually suppressed in histories of the Bauhaus. (Incidentally, the Bauhaus building at Dessau, designed by Gropius, has been restored to its original form, from the Nazis' stylistic alterations, by the GDR Government.)

Even so, an awareness of the key to these problems has long been apparent in, for example, Frank Lloyd Wright's assent that an "organic society" was a prerequisite for "organic architecture", or in Lewis Mumford's concept of "biotechnic" society—a hankering for a society at one with itself in modern conditions—that is, the Marxist might point out, a society in which there was no longer contradiction between productive forces and pro-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ductive relations. William Morris (in the *Daily Chronicle*, 1893) looking forward to a new art, "born from a condition of practical equality of economical condition among the whole population" wrote, "It is true that the blossom of it I shall not see; therefore I may be excused if, in common with other artists, I try to express myself through the art of today, which seems to us to be only a survival of the organic art of the past, in which the people shared, whatever the other drawbacks of their condition might have been". Modern architects need a similar realistic outlook, to recognise the "transitional" character of modern architecture rather than imagine that this generation, within the narrow vision of its professionalism and at this stage of the accelerating changes in modern society, is destined to produce "the" Style of a new era in human history.

In face of the urgent quantitative problems of architectural output, questions of style are no longer the important issue and are likely to be determined by the nature of the social building programme, the technological means of achieving it, and the political policies which promote or balk its achievement. This will take the discussion beyond that "survey of this more limited field" of architecture which led to the suggestion that an extension of functionalism, together with a complementary assertion of the utility of the fine arts, would provide "an adequate philosophy".

To paraphrase a quaint quotation, the architect must not, like the frog in the well, say "The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well".

Implications of Planning

Having given an historical account of the increasing dissociation of the specialisations (developments of partial aspects of early man's undifferentiated strivings to master his environment), having questioned these divisions and drawn attention to the shifting boundaries of the chalk-line between architect and engineer, W. H. Evans nevertheless, by limiting his study, in effect accepts and "takes these categories for granted". An approach based on that of his article "Town Planning Problems" (September, 1966) could have revealed more of real significance for architecture—for instance, the shifting boundaries between architect and planner, as in the Buchanan Report concept of "traffic architecture", in which buildings and access ways would be integrated, eliminating the old division of building and street (e.g. Cumbernauld New Town centre); the realisation that the function of every building, as a generator of traffic, extends beyond its own site; or the idea of a frame-structured city in which factory-produced dwelling units could be inserted—first anticipated in principle by Soviet building practice.

Architecture is not, in spite of the established Victorian concept, a matter of the design of individual buildings. Even preservationists like Duncan Sandys (Civic Amenities Bill) now recognise the qualitative value of whole groups of buildings of merit. Gropius, on "The Scope of Total Architecture", has described how he was "led on, step by step, from study of the function of the house to that of the street; from the street to the town; and finally to the still vaster implications of regional and national planning". As long ago as 1881, in his lecture, *The Prospects of Architecture in Civilisation*, William Morris defined, ". . . this union of the arts, mutually helpful and harmoniously subordinated one to another, which I have learned to think of as Architecture . . . embraces the consideration of the whole external surroundings of the life of man; . . . it means the moulding and altering to human needs of the very face of the earth itself, except in the outermost desert". Today, we can no longer afford to exclude even the desert when, on the one hand, exploitation for profit has created new deserts and, on the other, old deserts are being converted to production and settlement.

Ekistics

But, although W. H. Evans could think of no one who has analysed and answered the many problems, of the loss of unity amongst the disciplines concerned with environmental design, raised by Morris' arguments in the last century, various attempts have in fact been made at different levels. For example, the membership composition of the appropriate trade union, the Association of Building Technicians, restores at this level of organisation the unity of architect, engineer, town-planner, surveyor, clerk of works—who, up to the Industrial Revolution, might have been the same person. Also, there are now courses based (however incompletely) on the development of the educational idea of the Bauhaus in Prof. Percy Johnson-Marshall's "New University Faculty" proposals of ten years ago for the training of experts in building and planning, over the same range indicated by Gropius as quoted above, in an undergraduate course with a common first-year group of studies. But probably most important of all are the ideas and example of Constantinos Doxiadis who independently founded in Athens in 1958 a course to integrate all the various disciplines in the Graduate School of Ekistics, based on an analysis of the inter-relationships and reactions of the factors, over this range of activities, governing our dynamic and increasingly urban environment.

Constantinos Doxiadis recognises that ". . . the causes of our problems in architecture are basically similar to those of many of the problems of our era" and his concept of "ekistics", or the science of human settlements (the most meaningful introduc-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion to a jargon-laden babel of terminology since Patrick Geddes coined the word "conurbation": no satisfactory word in any language previously existed for the now-necessary comprehensive approach) ". . . co-ordinates economics, the social sciences, the political and administrative sciences, technology and aesthetics into a coherent whole and leads to the creation of a new type of human habitat".

The importance of this is the recognition of a qualitative change in the nature of architecture, of (in Morris' definition) "the consideration of the whole external surroundings of the life of man".

Vitruvius and Alberti, quoted by W.H.E., also considered the architect as not only a designer of buildings but, amongst other things, a designer of towns. Alberti too was an example of that early bourgeois Renaissance type, the "uomo universale", and was not only architect, but poet, painter, sculptor, philosopher, mathematician, antiquary. In the past an architect could, within the experience of his working lifetime, adjust himself to the rate of change, and meet the ekistic requirements, of his age.

Tempo of Change

Our environment, of course, changes continuously, sometimes barely perceptibly, but the essential characteristic of our time is the increased tempo of change. In order to co-operate with and co-ordinate the work of other specialists, on the scale of the increasing complex problems, the architect is forced out of the bounds of a limited architecture and this is the situation which has produced ekistics. For it is no longer possible in a single lifetime to gain the experience which is required. Ekistics has become necessary in order to understand the problems and find their solutions. Out of the schisms which, as W.H.E. points out, were first imposed on architecture by capitalist conditions, a unity of a new kind will be evolved in practice and in theory.

Doxiadis outlines the basis of a new approach in his book, *Architecture in Transition*. The basic problems, he insists, are the ones of people badly housed or not housed at all. Amongst the forces at play are the "world population explosion", accompanied by the greatest possible lag between the population increase and architectural production; the growth of urbanisation, altering the scale of architectural creation; a rapid socialisation which means that the scope of the architect is no longer limited to service of the upper classes but is expanded to the provision of housing and all the facilities of modern society for everybody; the demands for higher standards of accommodation and other facilities; the enormous number of technical and aesthetic problems in architectural design introduced by industrialisation and modern technology; the de-humanising intrusion of mechanised transport, again affecting the scale of man's surroundings and destroying the qualities of our historical heritage ("the love affair between man and architecture has been broken up by a third party") and, withal, the paradox of the car, as a means of individual mobility, producing conditions of collective immobility in our towns and cities.

Architecture of World to Come

His conclusion is that, living in a period of most rapid changes and faced with difficulties and problems in architecture as never before, the architect cannot survive as a designer of single buildings, much less of monuments, but only as a co-ordinator of architectural activity, in order to found the architecture of a world to come.

Ekistics is concerned not primarily with form in architecture, but with the content of architecture; with architecture in the fulness of its social and physical context.

Marxists may regret that Doxiadis in the twentieth century has not drawn the political conclusions that Morris did in the nineteenth century, and may find elements of opportunism and philosophical idealism to criticise among his ideas, but can hardly fail to welcome his humanist approach, his dialectical analysis and his attempts to provide a comprehensive theory to explain, and thence to control, the phenomenon of human settlements.

Ekistics makes its start by an historical study of the human settlement and, in this, the key contribution of V. Gordon Childe on the "Urban Revolution" is widely acknowledged. Marxists should have much more to contribute to a further development of this new unifying science of human settlements, of the "total architecture" of the human habitat. This is the field for detailed research, in socialist as well as capitalist societies, for a long period ahead.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism and Criticism

Robin Jardine

IT is a regrettable fact that, up to the present, no satisfactory Marxist aesthetic has been developed. The reasons are understandable. Preoccupation with the practical tasks of developing a new form of society naturally left little time for the working out of theoretical problems. Now, however, particularly since the "wind of change" from the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union blew away many of the theoretical cobwebs that were stifling Marxist thought, a healthy scepticism of dogmatic conclusions and a refusal to be bound by tradition has shown itself among Marxist thinkers in many different countries. Michael Long's article in last November's issue of *Marxism Today* is a good example of this.

Anyone who has been in the Communist Party for ten, twenty, or more, years will have to agree with his description of the kind of artistic criticisms that we made. We were so sure that we had the answers to all the problems, political, economic, philosophic, aesthetic. As we were not in a position to force anyone to accept our answers the effect of our ideas on the cultural development of Britain was not very great. Where, however, as in the Soviet Union from the 'twenties onward, and in a number of other countries since 1945, it was possible to attempt to constrict the artist within a dogmatic straitjacket, the effects were considerable and undoubtedly slowed down the pace of cultural advance.

The Artist's Rights

It is interesting to note how this sectarian attitude still persists, as shown by Alfred Corum's contribution (*Marxism Today*, January 1967) to the discussion where he states: "I conclude therefore that broadly speaking, the Communist Parties all over the world have not only a right but a duty in seeking to guide artists (it is impossible to coerce them) in the direction of making their work intelligible to their fellow-men." Surely, if there is one fact that emerges as crystal-clear from the history of the last 50 years, it is that the last body in the world that is capable of guiding the artist is a Communist Party. Whether the Party is in power or not this means, in effect, that the Executive takes on this task. No society can afford to hand over to a Communist Party Executive, or any other, the job of guiding the artist. That way lies the "cultural revolution".

Having said this, however, I am equally strongly opposed to the statement of Michael Long: " 'To do what one likes' in matters of cultural expression is an inviolable right." (It is, by the way, of some significance that Alfred Corum and Michael Long both use the word "right" for diametrically opposite conclusions.) The latter underlines his use of the word by adding the adjective "inviolable". But a right which under no circumstances is to be set aside has no place in a philosophy of change, of becoming, of process, such as Marxism.

Also the arrogance of this claim is such that I would hope most artists would hesitate to put it forward. Earlier in his article Michael Long sets out as the relevant question to ask of a poem: "Does this poem make an adequate and lively enactment of a process in such a way that our lives will henceforth be enhanced because our perceptions of that process have been cleansed, clarified and sharpened?". The question is an excellent one and can be applied to other forms of art than a poem. But if the artist is allowed to do what he likes in the matter of cultural expression, is it probable that he will produce works of art which will lead to an affirmative answer to the question? Not unless the artist is a person of a special mould—a claim frequently put forward by those who are not of the first rank, but totally unsubstantiated except, perhaps, in those rare cases for which we use the term "genius".

Artist and Society

It seems to me that the contradiction arises because the writer has failed to consider in his argument one very important factor—society. It is true that the artist is an individual who has chosen a particular medium in which to describe the world around or the world within in such a way that his personal reactions will enable others to attain to a deeper understanding of the world process. But the reason that he is an individual is precisely because he is a member of a society. The reason that he is able to express himself through the medium of his choice is because he is a member of a society.

The question at issue is, then, where does the artist stand in relation to society, and where does society stand in relation to the artist. The question is complicated by the fact that, in the course of time, unless conscious efforts are made to alter the process, social systems tend to resist change and to become ossified. This can happen with Socialist as well as with non-Socialist societies, which is why artists all over the world are finding that in regard to freedom of expression at least, they are facing similar problems; unless, of course, they conform, in,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which case their artistic efforts will tend to become as ossified as their social system.

Politics and Art

We must beware, however, of taking up the position of Alfred Corum where he states: "I find it inconceivable that the various reactionary views listed as pertaining to Pound, Eliot and Yeats can have had no effect on their artistic products." The implication would seem to be, *Ecrasez l'infâme*. It is, of course, true that when the artist, whether reactionary or progressive, uses his medium *primarily* as a vehicle for certain political views, the result is usually propaganda, not art. Where, however, the artist uses his medium honestly to describe what he sees, even if he is a reactionary in politics, he can still produce good art. If you want to trace the development of Capitalism in France during the first half of the 19th century, you can find no better guide than Balzac's *Comédie Humaine*, which is generally considered to have considerable artistic merit. Yet Balzac was about as reactionary in all his views as anyone could be and hated the society which he was describing.

What Alfred Corum has forgotten is that growth comes from the struggle between opposing tendencies, in which neither destroys the other but from which something new emerges. I am reminded of the story related by the Chinese philosopher Mencius about the man of Sung. "Let us not be like the man of Sung who, worried that his young plants were not growing, tugged at them (to help them grow). He returned home, full of fuss, saying, 'What a busy day! I have been helping my plants to grow.' His son hurried out to the fields to look, but the young plants had withered already." (*Mencius*, translated by W. A. C. H. Dobson, p. 86.)

Dual Role

If a society is to develop in a progressive way then its individual members must accept some restrictions to the freedom of what they do. That is the penalty for the ordered growth of the body politic. Unrestricted freedom for individuals or groups of individuals in a society leads to results similar to the unrestricted proliferation of a cancer in the body physical. The power of the monopoly capitalist to do as he likes in the matter of economic expression is an example of such a disease.

At this point you may, and probably will, ask: "Well, what do you propose? If the artist is not to be allowed to do as he likes in matters of cultural expression, who, or what organisation, is to tell him what he may do in these matters?" It may well be that any really satisfactory answer to the question in fact demands the development of a different social set-up. But we cannot leave the matter till then. We have to take up some position in the matter now.

The artist has a dual role in society. He is a citizen of that society with a particular social background of family, class, education. This role he shares with all the rest of us. But he also belongs to a functional grouping which transcends the particular social background. As citizen, the artist, like all the rest of us, has the right (and many of us would say, the duty) to take whatever part he can in the active running and organisation of the society. As artist, however, he has something to give society which the rest of us do not have. In virtue of this fact he has greater responsibilities than the rest of us. At the same time, society, as represented by the rest of us, has the responsibility of seeing that those gifts can be utilised to the best advantage, and of creating such a cultural atmosphere, through education and other means, that art in all its manifestations can flourish.

The powers that be, whether reactionary or progressive, will always tend to encourage the artist to glorify the status quo. The artist cannot accept this restriction and, in the measure of his powers, must always be looking for the next step in the process. As Marxists, we should try to influence society to recognise its artistic responsibilities, while also trying to help the artist to recognise his social responsibilities. It is from the unity of these contradictory social forces that will emerge the New Society that we hope for.

Please post *MARXISM TODAY* to me every month.

I enclose (put X in the appropriate box)

☐ 14s. 6d. for 6 months

☐ 29s. for one year.

(write in capital letters)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post with remittance to:

Central Books Ltd.,

37 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.), Watford, Herts.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BIG STOCK CLEARANCE SALE

Collet's LONDON BOOKSHOP

Commencing Saturday, 20th May, for four weeks.

A chance to pick up at greatly reduced prices some of the books you couldn't afford when they were first published.

For personal shoppers only—no lists are available.

Recent recommended publications:

REASON REVOLUTION AND POLITICAL THEORY
by Randhir Singh **30s**
Notes on Oakeshott's Rationalism in Politics.

CAPITALISM IN INDIA
by A. I. Levkovsky **60s**
A masterly exposition of the rise and development of capitalism in India.

WAR CRIMES IN VIETNAM
by Bertrand Russell **12s 6d**
This moving book is a passionate defence of a small people suffering systematic destruction.

VIETNAM! VIETNAM!
by Felix Greene
Bound edition: **30s** Paperback: **12s 6d**
In photographs and documents, the anatomy of a war that stains the conscience of mankind.

THE MURDERERS AMONG US
by S. Wiesenthal **30s**
A remarkable story of a man's search for justice in tracking down Nazi war criminals.

THE SUEZ AFFAIR
by Hugh Thomas **36s**
The most revealing analysis of the Suez crisis yet made.

THE RED REPUBLICAN
2 vols. **12 gns**

A complete facsimile reprint of Julian Harney's journal, containing amongst other contributions, the first English translation of the Communist Manifesto. Introduction by John Saville.

COLLET'S LONDON BOOKSHOP,
64/66 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2.

now out

ÆSCHYLUS AND ATHENS

George Thomson

Out of print since 1954, this world-famous Marxist study of classical Greek tragedy has now been re-issued in a new revised edition. It is far more than a study of the plays of Aeschylus and what they meant to the audience for whom they were written: it is a profound inquiry into the origins and development of Athenian democracy, and as such an inquiry into the roots of Western civilisation and culture. While the primary object of the book is a better understanding of Aeschylus, it covers a much wider field, including the history of early Greek poetry, the growth of the vital elements in Greek thought, the religious basis of Greek drama, and the relation of all these cultural developments to the transition from primitive tribal society to the Greek city-state. First published in 1941, this was the first attempt to apply to ancient Greek civilisation the principles of historical materialism.

374 pp illustrated

paper **21s** *cloth* **42s**

LAWRENCE & WISHART

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CENTRAL BOOKS

37 Grays Inn Road London WC1

the month's suggestions

THE VIETNAMESE NATION
(Contribution to a History)
by Jean Chesneaux
231 pp **32s**

TRUTH OR REPOSE
by (Lady) Jessie Street
338 pp **36s**

THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL
by Tamas Foldesi
228 pp **42s**

BUDAPEST: FOTOALBUM
139 pp *photographs* **35s**

THE SCOTTISH CARTER
by Angela Tuckett
448 pp **45s**

THE LORE AND LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLCHILDREN
by Iona & Peter Opie
417 pp *paperback* **12s 6d**

MATHEMATICS FOR THE MILLION
by Lancelot Hogben
648 pp *paperback* **10s 6d**

Call or write to our Mail Order department (post free for orders over £5)

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW 1967—No. 5

J. SCHLEIFSTEIN
Bonn Foreign Policy—Legend and Reality

FRANZ MUHRI
The Outlook for Austrian Labour

R. DALTON & V. MIRANDA
Present Phase of the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America

Price 2s. 6d. (plus 6d. postage)
15s. for 6 months
30s. for 1 year

from
CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.,
37 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

COMMUNIST PARTY
HOLIDAY SCHOOL
LOSEHILL HALL, CASTLETON
(In the heart of the Peak District)

August 5th-12th, 1967

on

"Capitalism and Socialism in the Sixties"

Lectures on "100 Years of 'Capital' and its relevance today"; "50 years of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., the Socialist World today"; "Prospects of the African Revolution"; "Some Problems of Marxism today"; "Socialism, Freedom and the Individual"; "Problems of Culture today"; etc. etc.

Cost: £11 per head

Apply to:
Education Department,
Communist Party,
16 King Street, London, W.C.2.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED